



CONNECTIONS

The AERA Graduate Student Council Newsletter

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The newsletter of the Graduate Student Council seeks to further the GSC mission by providing an outlet for graduate students and other contributors to address topics of interest to graduate students in education, including issues of intellectual, academic, professional, organizational, and personal relevance.

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Connections As a (Literal?) Metaphor

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According to Lakoff and Johnson, “the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (1980, p. 5). In this sense, the name of our redesigned newsletter is meant metaphorically; we want you to understand and experience our newsletter, which are literally only words on your computer, as connections. As you read the words, we hope that you understand and experience being connected to a community of people and ideas that are otherwise unknown or unfamiliar to you. Metaphors are powerful stimulators of action and thought, encouraging us to work and live in new ways. We hope that *Connections* becomes a metaphor for you in understanding and experiencing your graduate school experience, helping you remain connected to your work as you face the events and situations that create crevices along your path. Understanding graduate school as a connection allows us to see those crevices as simply something to jump over, climb

through, or cover with a bridge.

To that end, we also intend the newsletter to be literally about connections. It is meant to serve as a tool which you can use to jump over, climb through, or bridge those crevices. Specifically, this newsletter is your literal connection to: community, communication, social capital, resources, and knowledge. We would like to expand on each of those connection tools.

Above all, *Connections* is meant to be about community, connectedness, connecting graduate students to one another and the field of education.

Above all, *Connections* is meant to be about *community*, connectedness, connecting graduate students to one another and the field of education. Thus, the GSC and *Connections* will seek to encourage participation, offer support, and provide representation for the graduate student community in education. In our graduate programs, we become so immersed with people in our specific subject areas that we often forget that we will be working within a broader educational community beyond our AERA

division colleagues. We, the graduate students, are each others' community and, together, the future of AERA and the organizations in which we will work. We hope that this newsletter literally provides the vehicle through which community can be built.

Connections is also about *communication* among graduate students. Human connections, communities, are sustained by communication. The newsletter will seek to be a forum by which graduate students share ideas, voice opinions, and keep in touch with one another. *Connections* will contain articles written by any AERA graduate students who seek to inform, reach out to, or comment on issues of interest to graduate students. Use this venue to communicate with others.

Connections is also literally about helping you build your own *social capital*. Social capital is the theory behind the old saying, “It’s not what you know, it’s whom you know.” This newsletter will include columns that provide the information you need to get connected to critical and influential networks, people, and institutions. That is, *Connections* will provide tips and tricks on how to connect to powerful actors such as search committees, editors, organizations, and influential people in the field.

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From the Chair

Diane Jass Ketelhut
Chair
Harvard University

Hi, everyone. I trust you all enjoyed your holidays! I'd like to welcome you to *Connections*, our newly entitled newsletter. Not only does it now have a great name that epitomizes what we hope to accomplish with it, but it also has a new format. The Graduate Student Council has been working hard to redesign our newsletter so that it brings you greater variety of information and more access to issues that interest all of us. I hope you enjoy it!

In my report in the last newsletter, I mentioned that one of the goals of the GSC is to make AERA useful and friendly for graduate students. In this edition, I would like to talk about another goal of the GSC: to increase involvement of graduate students throughout AERA. We are working on this issue from several angles:

- We are increasing our campus liaison structure to improve dissemination of

information about AERA, including opportunities for involvement. Campus liaisons distribute information about AERA that is particularly pertinent to graduate students.

- We are venturing within AERA to increase the number of committees that have graduate students serving on them.
- We are also redesigning our election process to open up access to more graduate students.

How can you get involved in the GSC right now? There are four main ways:

- Contact our Community Leader, Wendi Laurence, at wendil@pdx.edu if you are interested in knowing more about possibly becoming a campus liaison.
- Sign up through the AERA website to be a reviewer for either the conference proposals or for one of the AERA journals.

- Contact the vice president of the division that your research is connected with, and ask to be considered for a position as representative to the Graduate Student Council for next year.

- Watch this space as well as our website for more information on running for one of our elected positions for 2006-2007.

I strongly encourage you to find an avenue for involvement. This has been an incredibly positive experience for me! If you have any questions on this, please contact me at Diane_Ketelhut@gse.harvard.edu.

Good luck!

Watch this space as well as our website for more information on running for one of our elected positions for 2006-2007.

Connections As a (Literal?) Metaphor

(Continued from page 1)

As such, *Connections* is also literally a resource for you, a connector to help you get from where you are to where you want to be. Each issue of *Connections* will provide information about upcoming conferences and workshops, calls for conference papers, chairs and reviewers, and/or links to new websites and developments.

Last but not least, *Connections* is about connecting you intellectually to the knowledge base that is formed out of educational research. The newsletter will literally present you with new perspectives on recurring issues, feature articles on pressing educational issues, and point to books and book reviews that are related to educational research. Very

few of us (any?) have time to read research outside of our specific sub-discipline within education, but yet we are all connected across our divisions on a central issue: education in our societies. *Connections*, then, is literally working to connect graduate students to the broad and comprehensive arena of educational research in an informal and accessible way, bridging the gap often felt between the realities of practice and the theories of research.

So, back to the oxymoron we presented in our title. *Connections* is intended to be both literal and a metaphor, creating the space for you to use it in whatever way best fits your needs. We hope that through *Connections* you will be connected to the larger

AERA graduate student community along our common educational purpose. That you will connect with others across disciplines, institutions, and areas of interest. That you will connect with your own graduate school experience as you leap over crevice after crevice. That you will connect with others through reading and contributing to *Connections*. And finally, that you will see the literal and metaphorical connections that exist every day, in every way, working together to build the path you walk upon.

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From the Chair-Elect

Hugo A. Garcia

Chair-Elect

University of Southern California

Hello and welcome to the GSC Winter 2005 *Connections* newsletter! As a graduate student at the University of Southern California's (USC) Rossier School of Education and a former community college student, I am interested in the transfer and retention of community college students, minority student retention, and student involvement.

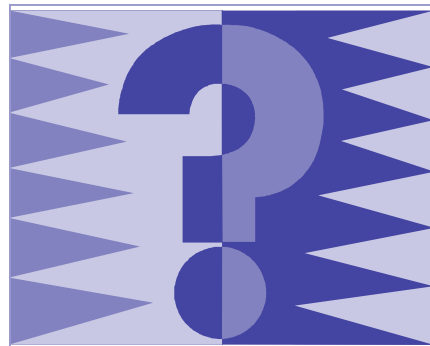
Although a majority of the students involved in AERA are in doctoral programs (Ed.D. or Ph.D.), there are also students in master's programs that are involved as well. It is safe to say that many of these students are considering enrolling and completing doctoral programs. Students in master's degree programs should attend AERA to explore their options.

I first joined AERA as a master's of education (M.Ed.) student at USC. I did not know whether I wanted to pursue a doctorate, so I enrolled in a master's program "to test the waters" and see if education was the right choice for me. After one year in the M.Ed. program and conducting research on transfer students, I realized that a doctorate was in my future. I have had numerous conversations with my Ph.D. and Ed.D. friends and colleagues to get their perspective on their

doctoral experience, and their advice has been invaluable in making my decision.

Given my involvement at AERA, I have a few bits of advice for any master's student who is thinking about pursuing a doctoral degree.

First, take advantage of the upcoming AERA



Students in master's degree programs should attend AERA to explore their options.

Annual Meeting in San Francisco—use the conference as an opportunity to meet people. Where else will you find the deans and faculty of every school of education in North America in one conference? If you plan in advance, you can meet a particular faculty member at AERA for a private conversation about shared research interests. For example, you could email a faculty member you want to meet to see if they intend to go to San Francisco. If he or she will be attending the up-

coming conference, ask for an opportunity to meet for lunch or coffee. Also, go to sessions and presentations where faculty of your prospective schools will be presenting or attending. This is a great way to meet faculty whom you were not able to contact in advance.

Second, talk to doctoral students. I talked to many students at AERA in San Diego and Montreal to get their perspective on their programs and to see if I would be a good fit at their respective institutions, because students tend to give the "real scoop" on what happens at their schools. There are many opportunities to meet these graduate students. You can attend the GSC Orientation, divisions' fireside chats, or the various division and school-sponsored receptions.

Finally, do not hesitate to contact any GSC members to ask them about their doctoral programs and experiences. Many of the GSC members are in their final years of study and will give you some great advice. Remember, we are all here to support one another.

In the end, you should pursue the degree and school that best fits you. You will have many people tell you where you should go, but follow your heart. After all, you will be there for at least the next three to five years. Good luck!

Graduate Student Seminars

Divisions offer seminars for small groups of graduate students during the AERA Annual Meeting in April. These seminars often help students think through their research plans, career options, and job opportunities with a special focus for those with interests that parallel that division. Some divisions offer stipends to offset expenses associated with attendance. If you are interested in applying for one of these, please check your division's website. Deadlines may fall in January.

October Planning Meeting Recap

Rachelle Ann Haroldson

Division I Representative
University of Minnesota

The GSC Planning Meeting took place on October 21 and 22, 2005, in Alexandria, Virginia. The Chair, Chair-Elect, officers, Community Leader, Program Chair, AERA Council Liaison, and one representative from each division were present. Diane Jass Ketelhut, Chair, welcomed everyone and discussed her vision for the year: to reach out to more graduate students and to obtain more graduate student representation throughout AERA. For the remainder of the morning session, the members introduced themselves and the division representatives presented their fireside chats for the Annual Meeting. Then the editors of the newsletter asked for input regarding the winter issue. Members suggested that the newsletter have specific themes and that contributors write articles about specific topics.



In the afternoon the GSC met with the Technology Committee, and the main goal of the meeting was to discuss the most useful aspects of and possibilities for the GSC's website. Currently, the specific website needs are redesigning the layout, posting pictures, developing online discussions, creating archives, and placing links to other resources. Getting basic information on the website and redesigning the website were the major issues addressed in the discussion. The technology subcommittee agreed to devise a plan with suggestions for the website (e.g., developing archives, including FAQ, providing links to journals, and incorporating a suggestion box) to be submitted to the GSC and the Web

Secretary, Ann Tiao.

After the technology meeting, the GSC discussed the Graduate Student Resource Center (GSRC). Hugo Garcia, the Chair-Elect, facilitated the discussion. His main concerns were improving the layout, networking, and alerting and attracting students to the GSRC in April. Members presented solutions that included more food, welcoming climate, better display of division representatives, message board, and calendar of events.

The Chair and Chair-Elect then addressed the graduate student orientation, with a proposed resolution for an orientation with less talking and more time for interaction. Division representatives would make posters again this year, but stand near them and have the orientation mirror a poster session to learn about GSC.

The final piece of Friday's planning session answered questions from AERA about the advancement of education research and how to be effective in this domain. The GSC would present its ideas about mentoring, student involvement in AERA, diversity, and professional development to the other Planning Meeting attendees the following day.

On Saturday morning the GSC reconvened and the election subcommittee presented their concerns about the election process, ways to encourage people to run for office, attendance at the election, and election of the chair elect. Suggestions included putting candidates' information online, moving to electronic voting, and having food at the election. The election subcommittee planned to describe a few election scenarios to be voted on for the handbook.

After lunch the GSC went over changes for the handbook, which will be voted on at the closed business meeting in April. The handbook talk switched over to a continuation of the newsletter discussion. The new title of the newsletter would now be *Connections*,

and this would also be the theme for the next issue.

Finally, the GSC brainstormed ideas for the chair's session and how to use the time to address concerns initiated by Hurricane Katrina. Members talked about designing this session to generate sensitivity, discuss traumatic experiences, and talk about how people handle crisis. The meeting closed early Saturday evening with AERA standing committees, including the GSC, presenting and discussing issues relevant to the present and future of education research.



Visit www.aera.net
to register for the
**AERA Annual
Meeting, which will
be held in San
Francisco from
April 7 through
April 11, 2006.**

Connections Across Divisions

The Impact of Standardized Testing on Research in Higher Education

Dirk Richter

Division D Representative
Ohio State University

Standardized testing is a very controversial topic in P-12 settings. Frankly, there are plenty of negative effects associated with testing (e.g., learning for and teaching to the test, loss of teacher autonomy, increased school pressure), but as a matter of fact testing also provides large amounts of data that are helpful for educational research. As an example of research that uses student test data I would like to introduce the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) study in Ohio.

TQP was founded in 2003 as a consortium among all fifty colleges and universities providing teacher education programs in Ohio. The main focus of this study is to identify relationships between characteristics of teacher attributes, teacher preparation, teacher performance and P-12 student learning. It seeks to understand who highly successful “value-added” teachers are, how they teach, how they interact with students and how they have been trained. There is not much knowledge in the literature about the interdependence of teacher preparation, teacher behavior and student performance because, historically, neither the data nor the statistical methods were available for this type of analysis. However, the data resulting from increased standardized testing and developments in computer programs for longitudinal data analysis have made it possible to handle these complex settings.

The TQP project consists of four different strands that all focus on different aspects of teacher quality. The first component is the graduate teacher survey study, which is administered from 2003 through 2008 and follows annual cohorts of teacher education students from the final year of preparation into their beginning years of teaching. The instrument for this study asks participants about their perceptions of their teacher preparation programs, their beliefs about teaching, and other personal characteristics. The data will provide insight about how teacher education may affect teachers’ attitudes and beliefs and also how these attitudes change over the first years of teaching.

The second and third strands of TQP are the novice and experienced teacher studies. These two components are mixed method studies that take a closer look at the interactions between educators and students and examine differences between beginning and experienced teachers but also between teachers with a range of value-added scores. For this

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Standardized Testing: A Direct and Indirect Influence on Evaluation and Development

Sonia Ben Jafaar

Division H Representative
University of Toronto

Division H, School Evaluation and Program Development, brings together people who are interested in applied research and evaluation in PreK-12 school systems. The membership includes practitioners, policymakers, and researchers who work in and with all levels of the education system. Together, they collaborate and share their understanding and questions about school evaluation and program development. Given this intersection of interests and people, standardized testing in education is not so much an influence on the work of Division H, but it is an integral part of the work in this field.

Ranson recently argued, “Accountability is no longer merely an important instrument or component within the system, but constitutes the system itself” (2003, p. 459) His statement could readily be applied to

What Has Been the Impact of Standardized Testing on the Work in Your Field?

performance-based accountability (PBA), where student performances on standardized tests serve as public school effectiveness indicators used to hold schools accountable for results. The intention is to foster school changes that enhance student learning and success by placing pressure on

the individuals in the system (Carnoy, Elmore, & Siskin, 2003; Earl & Katz, 2005).

No Child Left Behind is one example of the way in which PBA is applied to education systems. Couched in PBA, large-scale student testing is a key instrument to render schools more accountable and subsequently more effective and equitable, or so the proponents of testing suggest. Some critics argue that this mechanism has aggravated inequities in the system and should be revisited. The tension between equity and accountability is an ongoing dialogue that is often at the center of the arguments and work examining standard testing (Skrla & Scheurich, 2004).

The influence of standardized testing on school evaluation and program development is significant. The results of the testing are taken up to inform the direction of resources and programs and to judge the improvement efforts. The results of the test are compared to set performance standards, and the consequences attached to the results directs what the system believes constitutes quality.

Given this structure of the current education system, testing and ac-

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Connections Across Divisions

The Hegemonic Practices of Standardized Testing

Juanita Perea

Division K Representative, 2006-2008
California State University Monterey Bay

Kristen French

Division K Representative, 2006-2008
University of Massachusetts Amherst

We come to the complex question of standardized testing not only as two of the representatives for Division K but also as critical multicultural educators, as classroom teachers and as doctoral students. Here, we describe some of our own experiences that have led us to question the hegemonic practices of standardized testing within our bicoastal classrooms.

Juanita Perea: I have taught in a rural California school for the past six years and currently receive “training” to teach language arts, math and English language development. Standardized assessment has had negative effects on my school, where 70 percent of the students are Latino

and a larger percentage comes from low socio-economic background. The curricula and classroom assessments are mirrors of the state’s standardized test. My experience is similar to results from a study that showed that teachers from low socio-economic schools devote

substantial student time to test preparation activities, test review worksheets, and practice tests and concentrate more on teacher planning and delivery of instruction geared toward test content than teachers at other schools (Herman and Golan, 2005). Teachers are monitored to make sure that they are teaching the daily drills of memorization and speed. They are discouraged and reprimanded for not teaching to the test. Students are threatened with retention and punished with more daily drills. As stated by Stiggins (2002) assessments should be “for learning” and “of learning.” In reality, standardized assessments are used to sanction/punish schools, degrade teachers and label students according to the standards of the privileged.

Kristen French: I currently teach a multicultural education course, and for the last two years I have taught and conducted research as a writing and theater specialist in a magnet school in western Massachusetts. The urban school closely reflects the district’s demographics: 50 percent Latino, 30 percent Black, 20 percent White, and 76 percent low-income. Disheartened by the emphasis placed on training students to succeed on the writing portion of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), I began to examine the impact the test had

The Impact of Standardized Testing on the Field of Educational Policy and Politics

William Kyle Ingle

Division L Representative
Florida State University

Angela Hull

Division L Representative
University of Missouri–Columbia

Standard curricula and assessments were seen as answers to politicians’ demands for information that is “simple, comparable, timely, and which can be translated into the public arena” (Riley & Nutall, 1994, p. 6). However, this desire for simple, comparable, and timely information turned out not to be so simple after all. Although contention over the use of standardized testing certainly predates President Bush’s *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) legislation, it was a development that put testing and accountability at the center of federal education policy, invigorating an already divisive issue.

Commenting on NCLB’s impact, Hess and Kelly (2004) note that the legislation “marks a break with conservative tradition; it represents a massive shift of educational authority from the states to the federal government, and its far-reaching provisions dictate how schooling is delivered at the district and school level” (p. 2). Initially, NCLB’s testing and accountability verbiage led to strong bipartisan

support for the legislation. Democrats could use the issue to talk about education reform without simply talking about increased spending (but still provide a selling point for additional resources). Meanwhile, Republicans could rationalize new funds going to education for increased accountability and school choice, while also making ground on an issue historically dominated by the opposition party. Since NCLB’s enactment, standardized testing has become an increasingly thorny issue where bipartisan support once existed.

Numerous states, including historically conservative ones, have raised concerns about NCLB’s standardized testing issues. Exemplary of this is the state of Utah. Legislators in Utah have expressed a desire to utilize their existing U-PASS instrument that measures school effectiveness based on the percentage of students who pass and the percentage of students who make a year’s worth of progress each year. It tracks individual students from one year to the next and holds schools accountable for their growth (Utah State Office of Education, 2005). NCLB, however, measures school quality by the percentage of students—overall and in specific demographic groups—who pass state tests. Schools must make annual progress toward 100 percent proficiency in

What Has Been the Impact of Standardized Testing on the Work in Your Field?

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Connections Across Divisions

High-Stakes Testing: A Help or Hindrance to the Quality of the Teacher Workforce?

Jennifer Steele

Program Chair
Harvard University

Measuring Teacher Quality

In explaining variation in student achievement, there is mounting evidence that teacher quality matters more than any other aspect of schools (Aaronson, Barrow, & Sander, 2003; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rockoff, 2004). Nevertheless, there is considerable debate about how to define teacher quality. By requiring annual statewide testing and data management, the accountability movement is allowing some researchers to estimate teacher quality using students' growth on standardized tests from year to year (Sanders & Horn, 1998). Admittedly, these "value-added models" (VAMs) of teacher quality are subject to statistical assumptions that may or may not hold in all school settings, and rigorous research has cautioned against using them as definitive measures of quality (McCaffrey, Lockwood, Koretz, & Hamilton, 2003). However, VAMs may hold promise when used in combination with qualitative measures of teachers' effectiveness, such as principal observations (Braun, 2005; Jacob & Lefgren, 2005). Also, while standardized test results may never provide a thorough, comprehensive view of a student's abilities or a teacher's impact (Fair Test, 2005), they do provide one outcome-oriented lens through which to explore teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

Retaining and Equitably Distributing Quality Teachers

Of course, we cannot assume that the rise of high-stakes testing will improve teacher quality simply by expanding measurement possibilities. By shining its high beams on student achievement, the accountability movement brings teachers and schools under increased scrutiny. This scrutiny may either stoke or diminish the willingness of talented individuals to enter and stay in teaching. It may also influence their decisions about where to teach, potentially exacerbating staffing disparities that exist between low-performing and higher-performing schools (Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002).

The evidence of how teachers respond to high-stakes testing is mixed. A North Carolina study found that teacher turnover rates increased in low-performing schools relative to other schools after the first year of statewide accountability implementation (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Diaz, 2004). Specifically, the probability of leaving one's school increased by about 25 percent for both new and experienced teachers in schools that were officially labeled "low-performing." The authors conclude that accountability systems have a negative effect on teacher retention in low-performing schools. However, they find no differences in teachers' average experience levels or undergraduate college selectivity levels in low-performing schools before and after the accountability implementation.

A study in New York State came to a more optimistic conclusion, finding that the average experience levels, undergraduate college selectivity levels, and certification rates of fourth-grade teachers increased relative to other grades after statewide, high-stakes testing was implemented in the fourth and eighth grades (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2005). In addition, turnover was lower in fourth grade than in other elementary grades during that time period, especially in low-performing schools. The authors acknowledge that these may be short-term trends due, in part, to the funneling of school resources toward the tested grades. Still, the findings suggest that teachers do not necessarily run from the accountability spotlight, even in schools where they must struggle mightily toward the day in which no child is left behind.

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Connections Across Divisions, cont.

Division D (Continued from page 5)

part of the study, researchers sample fifty beginning and fifty experienced teachers and follow them over one to three years.

The fourth strand of TQP is structural equation modeling. This part of the study is focused on developing models to explain the interrelationships among preservice, novice, and experienced teacher variables and teachers' value-added scores, taking into account the characteristics of teachers' schools and higher education institutions.

In conclusion, the results of this study not only have the potential to provide an in-depth understanding about how teachers and school settings influence student learning, they can also be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of teacher preparation programs. Having that in mind, standardized testing plays a pivotal role not only at the school and district level but also in decision-making processes and reforms in teacher preparation programs in colleges and universities.

Division H (Continued from page 5)

accountability is infused in Division H work. At AERA 2006, Division H sessions will be highlighting the following questions:

- What are the intended and unintended consequences of accountability systems and their utility in promoting improved performance and equity?
- How do the results of standardized testing inform instructional decisions?
- How do standardized testing policies influence how local districts and schools identify interventions?
- How do standardized testing policies support and pressure systemic evidence-informed decision-making?
- How are standardized testing results used in program evaluations to satisfy the Program Evaluation Standards ?

In answering all of these questions, standardized testing is either at the center or on the periphery, influencing how leaders, educators, students, and policymakers are acting. Hence, Division H consistently works with the direct and indirect influences of standardized testing.

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Division K (Continued from page 6)

on students within the district. I found that testing has serious consequences for this closely monitored district, which has been threatened by state takeover if test scores are not improved. MCAS testing also has serious implications for student success as well. The graduates of 2003 were the first to be required to pass the MCAS to graduate. In an analysis of the Massachusetts' Department of Education's *Dropouts in Massachusetts Public Schools: 2003-2004*, Anne Wheelock, a senior research associate for Boston College's Progress Through the Education Pipeline Project, noted that "Massachusetts students in grades 11 and 12 who have not passed the MCAS are nine times more likely to drop out of school than students who have passed MCAS (2005, p. 1)." If the primary purpose of assessment is to promote student learning, then these dropout rates—common throughout the United States, particularly for students of color (Orfield and Wald, 2000)—are only one indication of the failure of standardized testing in our public schools.

Identifying the problem based on our experiences and deconstructing it is only the beginning of our attempts to counter these hegemonic outcomes. With an absence of room for problem-posing education, rather than "banking education" (Freire, 1970/2000), we have attempted to disrupt the discursive practices of testing by creating opportunities for critical literacy through teacher and student co-constructed inquiry groups and have challenged the standards used to develop test materials. In these difficult days of rote learning with the pendulum swinging far to the right, we as multicultural teachers must not ignore the divide between the haves and have nots with regards to the educational practices of standardized testing. We must take action through teacher, parent and student-led resistance, encouraging others to challenge the status quo and locate themselves within this movement. While the current regime supports dumbing down the curriculum and creating a monocultural basis of assessment, we continue to look for opportunities to challenge this ideology until it becomes obsolete. We support a resurgence of critical thinking and prioritize the voices of our students by recentering curriculum and assessments to reflect our students' identities.

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Connections Across Divisions, cont.

Division L (Continued from page 6)

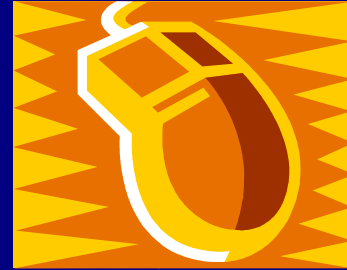
language arts and math for all students, regardless of ethnicity, primary language, family income, or disability or potentially face sanctions. Other states, such as Florida, have expressed concerns that large numbers of schools adjudged successful by its A-Plus Accountability System were deemed not producing adequate yearly progress per NCLB.

With the response to NCLB continuing to unfold, developments such as these are rife with research opportunities for education policy/politics researchers. The increasing amount of testing data being recorded and reported nationwide will continue to provide opportunities for advanced statistical approaches such as value-added modeling. Although the use of standardized test scores as a measure of teacher and school effectiveness has raised complaints among many, policymakers continue to consider testing data for the determination of merit pay, school grades, and school/individual accountability. Standardized testing does not appear to be going away any time soon. As such, it is a good time to be an educational politics and policy scholar.

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Do you have suggestions for future “Connections Across Divisions” columns or other newsletter-related recommendations?

Email your ideas to the Newsletter Editors,
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Ingrid Salamanca (isalaman@education.ucsb.edu).

About the AERA Graduate Student Council

The Graduate Student Council has five major responsibilities: annual meeting planning, student advocacy, information dissemination, community building, and self governance.

The mission of the Graduate Student Council is to facilitate and promote the transition from graduate student to professional researcher by providing opportunities within AERA for professional growth, development and advancement. In addition, the Graduate Student Council seeks to help graduate students navigate the obstacles, rewards, challenges, and support networks of academic life. Further, the Graduate Student Council will carry out the mission of AERA through the research, scholarship, and professional endeavors of graduate students.

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