



# The Southwest Educational Research Association News

Southwest Educational Research Association

Spring, 2000

## From the President

*Vince Paredes*

**A**s usual and despite all odds, we enjoyed another successful SERA Annual Meeting. If you didn't make it to the meeting this year, I'm sure you are aware that the weather made it difficult for many people to attend the conference. Before the cold weather hit, the conference was shaping up to be one of our biggest ever. Even with a lot of you missing, we still had a fairly well attended meeting in comparison to other years. We look forward to having everybody back in New Orleans in 2001.



This year we were glad to see a resurgence of practitioners participating in the research process and using research to make better the practice of their craft. My thanks go to the division chairs who helped put together the program, as well as the many other people who worked before and during the conference to make it a success. Also, special thanks should go to Ellis Tesh of Riverside Publishing and George Harris of American Guidance Service for their continued support of SERA.

The Executive Council is listed in its entirety elsewhere in this newsletter. However, I would like to mention some new and re-elected Executive Council members. David Allen is the new Graduate Student Representative. Kevin Rowell was elected to a two-year term on the Council. Kathy Mittag and Lea Witta were re-elected to the Council. Ron McBride takes a one-year position on the Council and Kelly Shapley was appointed Secretary to replace Dianne Taylor who is our new President-Elect and Program

*(Continued on page 2)*

## From the Past President

*Nancy K. Martin*

**I**t's hard to believe that another year has come and gone. This past year serving as SERA President has been the fastest year of my life. It seems like just yesterday when a colleague and I had an entertaining conversation with one of the secretaries in the office. It went something like this:

**Dr. Shoho:** Christine, did you know Dr. Martin is the new President of the Southwest Educational Research Association?

**Christine:** Really? Cool. Are you the first woman?

**Me:** No, just the first woman in a while. (Actually, I am the seventh woman to serve as President.)

**Christine:** Oh well, you must be the shortest President they've ever had!

**Me:** No, that would be Pat Alexander. (I tower over Pat.)

**Christine:** Oh. Well, surely you're the first Martin to be President.

**Me:** Nope. That distinction goes to my "husband," Max. (For you newcomers, grab an old-timer and ask for an explanation. This is an SERA inside joke.)

**Christine:** Gee, Dr. Martin. We need to find a "first" for you. You're the first one to end the millennium!

**Me:** Even that's debatable, but I'll take it.

As it turns out, with the assistance, diligence, and hard work of the executive council and the membership, a number of firsts were accomplished in 1999. Now that my Presidency has come to a close, it seems fitting to stop and reflect on them. The membership passed two changes to the by laws. First, we created a new position – that of Executive

*(Continued on page 3)*

### SERA Offices:

- President:**  
Vince Paredes
- President-Elect/Program Chair:**  
Dianne Taylor
- Immediate Past President:**  
Nancy K. Martin
- Treasurer:**  
Jan Scott
- Secretary:**  
Kelly Shapley
- Members at Large:**  
Kathy Friedrich  
Tommie Ann Hill-Natter  
Ron McBride  
Kathy Mittag  
Kevin Rowell  
Lea Witta
- Graduate Student Rep.:**  
David Allen
- Membership Chair:**  
Terri Paredes
- Historian:**  
John Hedl
- Graduate Student Advisors:**  
Mary Tallent-Runnels  
Claire Ellen Weinstein
- Co-Editors:**  
Robin K. Henson  
J. Kyle Roberts

**Watch for  
the upcoming  
"Call for Papers"  
for the  
New Orleans  
2001  
Conference!!!**

*("From the President," Continued from page 1)*  
Chair.

As this year's president I hope to continue the momentum established by SERA officers in the recent and not-so-recent past. Looking ahead, the Executive Council will continue to look for ways to make the organization attractive as an outlet for educational research and to increase the scope of service to its members.

One big way that we plan to do this is to establish a journal associated with SERA. The journal will provide an outlet for SERA members, as well as others, to disseminate quality research. The journal will contribute to the organization's overall goal of increasing the quality of education. It will also allow us to advance particular themes consistent with the character of SERA.

The newsletter you are now reading is intended to keep this organization on your mind a little during the year and to provide useful information. We are fortunate that Robin Henson and Kyle Roberts have agreed to take on this task for a while. Also, keep an eye out for the Call for Proposals later in the fall as well as other mailings throughout the year.

We plan on increasing the "web presence" of SERA through

the coming year. Each year the Call for Proposals is posted on the website. Outstanding Paper Award winners, and the current Executive Council members are listed. A preliminary schedule of the conference is posted as soon as it is available before the conference. You can also look up members in the online membership directory, update your address in the SERA database, check the status of your pre-registration, use the web-based pre-registration form, and get directions to the conference. Also, in the near future you will be able to call up the SERA website using our own url:  
<http://www.SERA-EdResearch.org>.

As you read this, the Outstanding Paper Award for the 2000 Annual meeting is being determined. If possible, the winner will present the paper at AERA. It won't be in the main program, but be sure to look for and attend the session if you go to AERA.

It will be an exciting time for me to watch and participate as we increase the quality and scope of SERA. We will continue to provide a friendly forum for the scholarly exchange of ideas. I hope you will join me as we work toward our ultimate goal of benefiting learners.

See you next year in New Orleans!

## Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Winner

*Congratulations to Aida Medina Adams, winner of the SERA Outstanding Graduate Student Paper Award for this year's conference! Aida attends Texas Tech University and will receive her doctorate in educational psychology. Below is a brief abstract of her winning paper:*

### *"Relationships Among Acculturation, Socioeconomic Status, and Academic Performance Among Mexican American Students"*

**M**exican Americans are a very diverse group, therefore a comprehensive approach was taken in order to better understand and educate this group. This study considered the correlations and intercorrelations between following variables: acculturation, socioeconomic status, and academic performance. Acculturation and socioeconomic status was theorized to influence academic performance. The participants in this study were 266 5th and 6th grade students from El Paso and San Antonio, Texas. Structural equation models were developed to determine relationships among these measures. The acculturation latent variable was described by scores on the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II: Children's Scale, participant's generational level, and Proximity to

the US-Mexico Boarder (El Paso or San Antonio). The latent variable socioeconomic status was described by parent's highest educational level and participation in school lunch program (free, reduced, or regular). The final latent variable, academic performance, was described by reading and math scores on the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills standardized test.

For the acculturation latent variable, results indicated significant relationships for generational levels and acculturation although differences between cities in Texas were not observed. Parental highest educational level and school lunch program participation did significantly describe socioeconomic status. The structural model indicated a significant relationship between the latent variables acculturation and socioeconomic status. A non-significant relationship was observed from the latent variables socioeconomic status to academic performance. Further, a significant relationship was observed leading from the acculturation latent variable to academic performance variable. The results from this study appear to support prior studies in that generational level and socioeconomic status influence acculturation. Additionally, acculturation influences academic performance for San Antonio students. This study demonstrates the diversity among Mexican American students in that significant differences were observed between students from El Paso and San Antonio. Comprehensive studies on Mexican Americans provide educators with increased knowledge on these students which may translate into increased academic achievement.



## 2001 Annual Meeting New Orleans, LA

- Dianne Taylor

**T**he 2001 annual meeting of SERA is slated for New Orleans for the end of January. Negotiations are being finalized for a hotel in or near the French Quarter to provide easy access to the entertainment and excellent dining available in the city. The last time SERA came to New Or-

leans, a record number of proposals were received! Keep watch for the "Call for Papers" in the next edition of the SERA Newsletter. We look forward to setting another SERA record and encourage all to plan their research agenda to enable findings to be presented at SERA in New Orleans next year!!!

*("Past President," Continued from page 1)*

Director. Currently, the executive council is putting the finishing touches on a position description. We expect to be asking for applications from interested parties in the near future. As a result of the second by law change, our treasurer is now an appointed (non-voting) member of the executive council. This is an important revision that gives us greater oversight of and accountability for the Association's fiscal affairs. The board has appointed our previously elected Treasurer, Dr. Janine Scott (USM), to serve in this capacity. I know she will continue to serve SERA in the same outstanding fashion that she has over the last few years.

In addition to these changes in the by laws, we also submitted a formal proposal to a publisher for the development of a journal. Dr. Larry Daniel (UNT) has done the lion's share of the work on this and I am very grateful to him for his continued

**We also submitted a formal proposal to a publisher for the development of a journal.**

dedication to this project – as well as others. Having an SERA journal is something the council has been discussing for quite some time and there are two important things I want to make clear on this topic. First, this is not a "done deal" and negotiations will continue until such time that the Council feels comfortable in making a final decision. Second, there are a large number of issues to consider when contemplating such an important undertaking. Rest assured that the executive council carefully considers the best interest of the association and its members while making important decisions such as these.

I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to all those who have worked so hard throughout the year. First and foremost, I must thank Vince Paredes who did an outstanding job as Program Chair. Tyson Bennett, local arrangements chair, worked tirelessly and it showed. Thanks, Tyson, for such a fine job. I am also grateful to Terri Paredes, Membership Chair, for her countless contributions behind the

scenes. I owe a special thanks to the Executive Council officers and members: Dianne Taylor, Jan Scott, Kathy Mittag, Kathy Friedrich, Kelly Shapley, Tommie Ann Hill-Natter, and Linda Frazer. Kim Bilica, graduate student representative, has been a joy to work with this year and leaves some sizeable shoes to fill. John Hedl did an excellent job of finding a hotel and negotiating the contract for us.

As always, I am grateful to Riverside Publishing and Ellis Tesh. SERA would not be the association it is today if not for Riverside's support over the years. The Riverside speaker, Maureen Di-Marco, was excellent. Those of you who missed hearing her speak missed a real treat. Likewise, Rebecca Zwick, the President's Invited Speaker, was also outstanding, thought provoking, and made a real contribution to the quality of the conference. Finally, I want to thank AGS and George Harris for providing the continental breakfast for us on Saturday morning.

Almost every SERA conference has its stories that live on long after the meeting is over. The 1999 meeting brought us our first "blizzard" since 1984. The weather prevented many of you from being able to join us. Rest assured, you were greatly missed! I wish you all could have made it because it was a great conference. However, the important thing is that no one was injured while attempting to travel to or from the conference. The snow, sleet, and rain gave us all some obstacles to overcome and something to talk about for years to come. Let's plan to reminisce at SERA 2001 in New Orleans. See you all there!

Nancy

**The snow, sleet, and rain [at this year's conference in Dallas] gave us all some obstacles to overcome and something to talk about for years to come.**

## SERA Remembered

### Ed Drahozal, retired Riverside Publishing Company

*The following is Part One of a two-part reflection by Ed Drahozal on the Past, Present, and Future of SERA. Part Two (the Present and Future) will appear in an upcoming newsletter. SERA would like to express sincere thanks for our long relationship with Riverside Publishing.*

#### The Past

**T**he first I heard about SERA was when George Harris, the regional test coordinator for Riverside (then called the Test Department of the Educational Division of Houghton Mifflin Company), called me to ask if we could help support the SERA startup. Wayne Applegate, then with the Dallas ISD and later on SERA president, had called George for help because the SERA bank account was near zero. George said he had funds to help mail the SERA newsletter and announcement of the Dallas annual meeting. And, he was willing to finance the reception. He wanted me to obtain the services of/pay for an author trip and for me to make a presentation or two. He did; we did; and I'm very please we've continued our support.

Last year's meeting (1999) at the St. Anthony brought back memories of our first SERA meeting in San Antonio. At that time we used the presidential suite for the opening night reception. This January, I visited that second-floor suite and

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**I had a great time at the meeting . . . while Mike Ash tried to alleviate my pain by making certain that I was more than adequately served.**

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also checked the veranda where the overflow crowd and the smokers were accommodated. In any case, as we were preparing for the reception I sliced open my hand while opening a can of peanuts! Barbara Hodges, one of our Riverside people, had to make a quick trip to Walgreens for a bandage sufficiently large to stem the flow of blood! I had a great time at the meeting because Barb, George Harris, and

George Powell had to get the beer out of the bath tub, mix drinks (very little wine was consumed then), and otherwise host the party while Mike Ash tried to alleviate my pain by making certain I was more than adequately served.

There are still a number of active SERA members who remember the Villa Capri in Austin. Like the hotel in Dallas and for the same reason, the Villa Capri no longer exists. During that era, we had a lot of meetings in "economy" hotels

and motels and, contrary to rumors you may have heard, I never saw a cockroach at the Villa or any of our hotels. But we sure had one disruptive ice storm during our second visit to the Villa Capri. The caterer could not make it so I — a Northerner — was recruited to drive one of the Riverside cars to a food store. I made it but the return trip to the Villa down a small hill and back up another hill behind the hotel entailed driving over the curb, down the sidewalk about fifty yards, and back onto the street to circumvent a massive fender-bender at the bottom of the hill.

During the first ten to twelve years, many school district personnel were active participants in SERA meetings. Wayne Applegate and his testing and research colleagues directed by Bill Webster at Dallas ISD, Freda Holley and her staff at Austin ISD — including Glynn Ligon, a future SERA president, and many urban and suburban district testing and research directors presented some excellent and very practical papers. Perhaps thirty percent of the program involved school district personnel. About fifty percent of the program was devoted to theoretical and practical papers presented by college and university professors and researchers, many of whom were and still are respected and renowned writers, editors, and researchers. The remainder of the presenters were graduate student and "others."

(To be continued: Ed Drahozal comments on SERA's development from these formative years and suggests future directions)

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**You're kidding!!!!  
You count SERA attendance?**

## APA Task Force Report Now Available Bruce Thompson

In 1996, following formal debates at both APA and APS regarding whether statistical significance tests should be banned, the APA Board of Scientific Affairs appointed the Task Force on Statistical Inference to address these and related concerns. The full report of the Task Force appears in the August, 1999 issue of the *American Psychologist*. A copy of this article can also be obtained at Web address: <http://www.apa.org/journals/amp/amp548594.html>.

More importantly, hopefully this report will overcome the near-complete inertia in the field as regards reporting effect sizes in all articles and conference papers. The APA publication manual (1994, p. 18) did "encourage" effect size reporting, and some journals now do "require" effect size reporting (cf. Heldref Foundation, 1997; Murphy, 1997; Thompson, 1994). But to date, 11 empirical studies show that this encouragement has had little, if any, effect (e.g., Keselman et al., 1998; Snyder & Thompson, 1998).

Perhaps the 1994 manual's encouragement has been so ineffective because the encouragement was (a) inherently vague and (b) inherently self-canceling (Thompson, 1999).

Perhaps following the dissemination of this important new

article, researchers will consult useful treatments (e.g., Rosenthal, 1994; Snyder & Lawson, 1993) for guidance on reporting and interpreting effect sizes.

Perhaps editors and reviewers will evolve in their expectations, and textbooks authors will evolve in their treatments of statistical tests and effect sizes.

Heldref Foundation. (1997). Guidelines for contributors. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 65, 95-96.

Murphy, K.R. (1997). Editorial. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 3-5.

Rosenthal, R. (1994). Parametric measures of effect size. In H. Cooper & L.V. Hedges (Eds.), *The handbook of research synthesis* (pp. 231-244). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Snyder, P., & Lawson, S. (1993). Evaluating results using corrected and uncorrected effect size estimates. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 61, 334-349.

Snyder, P.A., & Thompson, B. (1998). Use of tests of statistical significance and other analytic choices in a school psychology journal: Review of practices and suggested alternatives. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 13, 335-348.

Thompson, B. (1994). Guidelines for authors. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 54, 837-847.

Thompson, B. (1999). Journal editorial policies regarding statistical significance tests: Heat is to fire as p is to importance. *Educational Psychology Review*, 11, 157-169.

## SERA Loves Graduate Students! Kim Bilica (outgoing grad student rep)

Greetings, SERA graduate students! It has been my sincere honor and privilege to work with you over the past year as your representative to the SERA Executive Council. As you know, SERA is committed to graduate research, and the 2000 conference in Dallas provided plenty of opportunities for us to show our expertise! As you reflect upon the conference, I hope that you share a sense of pride in the fine work produced and presented by graduates from across the southwest region. Here are just a few highlights:

### ***New Faces***

Although the cold, icy weather proved to be a hindrance for some of us, the conference was still very successful and hosted a large number of *new* graduate students. The large graduate representation was especially evident during our meeting on Thursday night when we had a standing-room only attendance!

### ***Streamlined Communication***

Technology has become an integral part of the SERA experience. Many of us were able to register and obtain information quickly and efficiently from our SERA Website. In addition,

communication about SERA events is more fluid with our graduate Email list. I hope that we can continue to expand our use of technology and open lines of communication between and among our members.

### ***Impressive Scholarship***

The large number of high-quality submissions for the graduate student paper award created some stiff competition. Congratulations to each of you for your hard work and especially to Aida Adams, recipient of the award for this year.

### ***Networking***

The grad student hospitality room certainly provided a comfortable environment in which to see old friends and to meet new ones over a cup of hot tea! Thanks to those of you who brought job postings, extra copies of papers, and announcements about SERA events to the room.

### ***Edifying Seminars***

The Publishing seminar was a huge success! If you have any suggestions for other seminars that you would find useful, contact David Allen (dallen@ttu.edu) with your ideas.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to work for you. I hope to see you in New Orleans!



Southwest Educational  
Research Association

Vince Paredes  
Evaluation Software Publishing  
1510 West 34th St., Suite 200  
Austin, Texas 78703-1433  
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Introducing the New Graduate Student Rep

**H**ello SERA members and graduate students! My name is David Allen and I am a doctoral student in curriculum and instruction at Texas Tech University. I am pleased to serve as the new SERA graduate student representative for the upcoming year.

My vision for the upcoming year is bright and includes several important elements for graduate students. First, I would like to tighten the communication between graduate students throughout the region. This may take the form of an electronic bulletin board or list-serve, through which graduate students can engage in research related discourse.

Second, I hope to continue SERA representation at the campus level for graduate students. While working with Kim Bilica (former rep) over the past year, I have been kept informed of SERA news and deadlines. This communication needs to continue by

gathering graduate students from each campus within the region to act as school representatives. If you're interested, please email me!

Finally, the Executive Council's commitment to graduate student research should continue and even expand. I would like to see the development of more seminars for graduate students in New Orleans next year.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance. I can be reached at [dallen@ttacs.ttu.edu](mailto:dallen@ttacs.ttu.edu).



David Allen  
Grad Student Rep  
Texas Tech Univ.

### **-Note-**

*If your mailing label does not say "00" or "01", your membership has expired. Please direct all renewal of membership requests to Vince Paredes, current president and membership chair (address above).*

**SERA Web-Site:**  
[www.evalsoft.com/sera](http://www.evalsoft.com/sera)