

# SERA Newsletter

Fall 2007



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Proposers will learn about the acceptance of their proposals approximately around **November 5th**. The tentative schedules will be available around **December 1**.

Southwest Educational Research Association – <http://www.sera-edresearch.org/news>

## Annual Conference in New Orleans- February 6 – 9, 2008

### Things You REALLY Need to Know About SERA Conference Hotel Reservations

The hotel for the 31st annual meeting of the Southwest Educational Research Association is the Hotel Monteleone, located in the historic French Quarter in 2008:

<http://www.hotelmonteleone.com>  
SERA this year has negotiated a two-tiered structure for our sleeping room block, which protects a very large block of sleeping rooms at the SERA conference rate for reservations made until mid-December, and then a smaller room block until mid-January. Reserve your room early.

**Here are some of the things you need to know:**

1. Reservations can only be made by phone, using the toll free number: 800/535-9595. When you make your hotel reservation, tell the hotel staff

that you want the conference rate for the Southwest Educational Research Association.

2. SERA blocks sleeping rooms for the annual meeting. If these sleeping rooms are not used by SERA members, SERA must pay a very sizeable financial penalty. **Please help us keep our costs low by staying in the conference hotel within the SERA room block.**

3. Each year SERA awards student travel stipends to students attending and registered for the annual meeting. **Only students (a) attending the Thursday business luncheon and (b) registered for rooms in the conference hotel are eligible for these stipends.** (The stipends are paid directly to the hotel against winners' hotel bills.)

## South Padre Island – February 4-7, 2009

**The 2009 Conference will be held in South Padre Island. This is a premiere resort for people from all walks of life.**

While at the conference, you can enjoy South Padre Beach, which is ranked as one of America's top 10 beaches. This beach is a 34 mile long stretch of white

sand. To the east is the Gulf of Mexico and to the west is Laguna Madre Bay. There is a vibrant business climate and a long list of things for everyone to enjoy. The island is a playground for sailing, fishing, windsurfing, dolphin watching, horseback riding, shopping and golfing. For those who enjoy wildlife, South Padre has over 300 recorded species of birds. The

moderate temperatures year round will be welcoming for the February conference. Hotel accommodations will be on the beach at the Sheraton. <http://www.webcollateral.com/sheraton/SheratonSouthPadre/index.htm>

The Sheraton provides 200 rooms and 50 condominiums all featuring private balconies and views of the Gulf of Mexico.



[Kathleen Mittag](#)

## The Pres Says . . .



*The gavel exchange symbolizing the transition from Kyle Roberts' to Gilbert Naizer's presidency*

*"To lead people, walk beside them ... As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate ... When the best*

I look forward to seeing every member at the annual meeting! The Executive Council recently met in New Orleans and the Hotel Monteleone is as beautiful as ever. The French Quarter is still amazing and the food is wonderful.

### Conference highlights:

I am very excited that **James Popham**, well-known educational evaluation expert & Professor Emeritus at UCLA will be the President's Invited Speaker. His address will be Thursday afternoon.

Everyone can benefit from the "How to Publish" workshop on Wednesday conducted by several journal editors. We are thrilled to have the "Constructivist Inquiry in Practice" workshop by Yvonna Lincoln on Friday & Saturday.

Special thanks to **Robert Capraro**, President-Elect and Program Chair, for his hard work coordinating the efforts of the Divisional Chairs and dedicated proposal reviewers. Be sure to check the SERA website for the conference schedule as time draws near.

**Sonya Carr**, Local Arrangements Chair has worked closely with Monteleone staff, planning a

superb conference experience and a spectacular luncheon! Please note the deadlines in the newsletter for hotel reservations.

Consider submitting your paper to the Outstanding Paper Award. The winner of the **OUTSTANDING PAPER AWARD** will receive \$500 to help defray the costs involved in attending the 2008 AERA meeting and will present the paper at an "Outstanding Papers from the State and Regional Research Session." Graduate students can additionally submit their paper to the Outstanding Graduate Paper Award which carries a \$250 award. Student authors should **electronically** submit completed copies of their papers to the SERA President to be **RECEIVED BY 5:00 P.M. FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2008**. The award winner will be announced at the SERA luncheon on Thursday, February 7, 2008. Criteria and submission procedures for both of these can be found in the Call for Proposals in the Spring 2007 Newsletter, which is posted on the SERA website.

Finally, encourage your colleagues and graduate students to join SERA and come to the conference. Thanks for your participation and for your continued support of SERA. We look forward to another successful conference! See you in February!!

[By Gilbert Naizer](#)

## Meet the Board

**Bruce Thompson** is Distinguished Professor and College Distinguished Research Fellow of Educational Psychology, and Distinguished Professor of Library Sciences, Texas A&M University, and Adjunct Professor of Allied Health Sciences, Baylor College of Medicine (Houston). He is co-editor of the teaching, learning, and human development section of the American Educational Research Journal (AERJ:TLHD), and past editor of Educational and Psychological Measurement, the series, Advances in Social Science Methodology, and two other journals. He is the author/editor of nearly 200 articles, and several books, including the recently published Foundations of Behavioral Statistics, and Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. His contributions have been especially influential in moving the field as regards greater emphasis on effect size reporting and interpretation, and promoting improved understanding of score reliability.



[Bruce Thompson](#)

**Gil Naizer**, Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, is currently serving as Interim Assistant Dean of the College of Education and Human Services at Texas A&M Commerce. Gil earned his doctorate from Texas A&M University. He is currently serving SERA as President, and in the past has been program chair/president elect, board member at large, division chair and “director of multimedia services” (aka overhead guru). He is a science educator, whose research agenda has focused on teacher professional development and inquiry teaching methods. [Gilbert Naizer](#)

**Robert M. Capraro**, Ph.D, Is an Associate Professor of Mathematics Education, in the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture at Texas A&M University. His research interests include representational models and learning transfer, curriculum design and evaluation in mathematics and science, Project-Based Learning (PBL), school change, and quantitative research methodology with a focus on replicability. He has 22 peer-reviewed articles, 2 book chapters, 39 national presentations, 7 invited presentations, and over 1.3 million in external funding. Dr. Capraro travels extensively, working with schools and school districts to plan for, develop, and execute mathematics curriculum innovations including project-based learning, creative mathematics assessment, and designing mathematics learning activities for transfer. He has held the post of associate editor for the *American Educational Research Journal*, *School Science and Mathematics Journal*, on the editorial board for the *Middle Grades Research Journal* and *Research in Middle Level Learning* and a member of the Research Advisory Board for the National Middle School Association. He was recently named visiting scholar by the Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ and selected by the college as their nominee for the university wide competition for the JoAnn Treat Research Award.



[Robert M. Capraro](#)

## Meet the Board

**Sonya Carr** is the W. L. Billups Endowed Professor in the Department of Teaching & Learning at Southeastern Louisiana University. She is the local arrangements chair for the SERA 2008 Annual Meeting to be held in New Orleans. Sonya's research interests focus on classroom assessment, differentiated instruction, and teacher induction and mentoring. She is active in the state and national special education community. Sonya has been a member of SERA since her days as a doctoral student. She served as a Member-at-Large on the SERA Executive Board for 2005-2007 and currently serves as Division V Chair.



[Sonya Carr](#)

## [Graduate Student News](#)

For those of you new to SERA, welcome! I hope you found the time to submit a conference proposal over the summer. Even if you did not, I highly encourage you to attend the conference. In addition to learning from experts and peers alike, and networking with faculty from all over the region, this year's conference will be in the French Quarter of New Orleans—starting the day after Mardi Gras! How fun is that!?!

And for those "seasoned" graduate students out there, welcome back! Even with mid-terms at hand, it seems like the semester just got started. Before you know it, finals will be upon us, so keep plugging away at those studies. And remember to tuck those class papers away in a safe place. They are perfect fodder for future SERA conference papers.

Your all-volunteer graduate leadership council and I are revving up for New Orleans. First of all, I am in the process of contacting deans about renewing their participation in the deans' awards. Once your dean commits to the award, graduate students at your school will be eligible to win cash for exceptional papers. Remember, these "Deans' Awards" are separate from the SERA Outstanding Paper. Details will be announced as we get closer to the conference.

Also, universities with strong attendance will be re-volunteering members to the graduate leadership council. The current council members are Dwain K. Augustine (Lamar), Robin Capt (Tx Tech), Rick Kane (UNF), Norma A. Ramos (Sam Houston), Jennifer Roberts (UNT), Ting Sha (UH), Barb Shrout (SFA), Cindy Warren (A&M), and Julia H. Yoo (UT-Austin). If you would like to be a part of SERA, this is a great opportunity. Ask any of the council members for more information.

Lastly, elections for my replacement as the next graduate student representative takes place at the start of the conference during the graduate student session. Please plan on attending. All graduate students attending the conference are eligible to vote. In addition, we usually have cool giveaways (like books and software), plus it is a great chance to network with peers and faculty members. Hope to see you there!

Until New Orleans..., "Laissez les bons temps rouler!"

[Kevin Kalinowski](#)

SERA 2008 Graduate Student Representative  
University of North Texas

## Workshops

## Qualitative Research

8-hour session on Friday afternoon (1:00 - 5:00pm) and Saturday morning (8:00am - 12:00pm).



**Yvonna S. Lincoln** is a Texas A&M University Distinguished Professor of Higher Education and Educational Administration, and holder of the Ruth Harrington Chair. She is author, coauthor, or editor of books such as Naturalistic Inquiry and Fourth Generation Evaluation (both with Egon G. Guba), and Organizational Theory and Inquiry. She served as Vice President of Division J (Postsecondary Education) of the American Educational Research Association and as president of the American Evaluation Association. Dr. Lincoln co-edited, with Dr. Denzin, the various editions of the Handbook of Qualitative Research. She is Co-Editor of American Educational Research Journal: Teaching, Learning and Human Development and of Qualitative Inquiry.

## How To Publish

4-hour session on Wednesday afternoon (1:00 - 5:00pm)

### BIOs OF THE "HOW TO PUBLISH" WORKSHOP LEADERS

The "How to Publish" training workshop will be held in the early afternoon on the Wednesday that the 31st annual SERA meeting begins. The workshop has a \$30 ticket price, seats are limited. As the following biographies suggest, the four leaders are well qualified to provide incredible insights and suggestions.

**Larry G. Daniel** is Dean and Professor of Education at the University of North Florida. Dr. Daniel is the Co-Editor of Research in the Schools, and a former Associate Editor of Educational and Psychological Measurement. Dr. Daniel is the author of numerous articles, and a past president of SERA.

**Robin K. Henson** is Associate Professor of Education at the University of North Texas. Dr. Henson is Associate Editor of Educational and Psychological Measurement. Dr. Henson is widely published, and has previously served as a member of the SERA Board.

**Anthony Onwuegbuzie** is Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling at Sam Houston State University. He teaches courses in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research, and writes extensively on topics related to all three areas. Dr. Onwuegbuzie has secured more than 200 refereed journal articles and book chapters, and has made approximately 400 presentations and keynote addresses at regional, national, and international conferences and venues. He is an Editor of Educational Researcher and Co-editor of Research in the Schools.

**Bruce Thompson** is Distinguished Professor, Texas A&M University. He is co-editor of the teaching, learning, and human development section of the American Educational Research Journal (AERJ:TLHD), and past editor of Educational and Psychological Measurement, the series, Advances in Social Science Methodology, and two other journals. He is the author/editor of nearly 200 articles, and several books, including the recently published Foundations of Behavioral Statistics, and Factor Analysis.

## President: 2007-2008

Gilbert Naizer, Texas A&M –  
Commerce

## President-Elect: 2007-2008

Robert M. Capraro, Texas A&M –  
College Station

## Executive Director:

### Lifetime

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University

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Kyle Roberts, Baylor College of  
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Amy Dellinger 2006-08  
University of New Orleans

Bill Jasper 2006-08  
Sam Houston State University

Kim Bilica 2007-09  
University of Texas – San  
Antonio

Jason King 2007-09  
Baylor College of Medicine -  
Houston

James Telese 2007-09  
University of Texas – Brownsville

### Graduate Student

#### Representative

Kevin E. Kalinowski  
University of North Texas

### School District Representative

Rick Mauderer – Birdville ISD

### Historian

John J. Hedl- U -Texas SW Med  
Center-Dallas

### Membership Chair

Vince Paredes

Newsletter Editor

## Elections News

### About the Hare Electoral System

SERA ballots will be sent in the mail. We encourage you to vote. SERA elections use the Hare system. This system reallocates votes in races with more than 2 candidates until each position obtains a majority of the votes cast. Sometimes this system is also called the "Instant Run-off Voting System."

For example, if 3 candidates were running for one office, and the first round rankings were:

CANDIDATES	Ger	Sue	Bob	Voter
	3	1	2	"A"
	3	1	2	"B"
	1	3	2	"C"
	3	2	1	"D"
	1	3	2	"E"
	2	3	1	"F"
	1	3	2	"G"
	1	3	2	"H"
	3	2	1	"I"
	4	2	3	

#### First place votes

Because no candidate received 5 or more of the 9 first place votes, Voters "A's" and "B's" ranks for the last-place candidate, Sue, would be reallocated to the remaining candidates, and Sue would be eliminated as a candidate, as follows:

Ger	Sue	Bob	Voter
(2)	(1)		"A"
(2)	(1)		"B"
1	2		"C"
(2)	1		"D"
1	2		"E"
2	1		"F"
1	2		"G"
1	2		"H"
(2)	1		"I"
4	5		

#### First place votes

At this point, Bob has a majority of the 9 votes, and would be elected, even though Geri had more first place votes than Bob in the initial

To join SERA, please contact  
[Vince Paredes.](#)

## Nightlife – New Orleans: MESSAGE FROM THE SERA LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS CHAIR

We are looking forward to your visit to New Orleans for the 2008 SERA Annual Meeting. In addition to encouraging you to participate in the many professional opportunities available, we want you to take advantage of what the city has to offer!

New Orleans means many things to many people. Since Hurricane Katrina, some areas of the city have struggled to recapture life before the storm. Other areas of the city, including the French Quarter and much of downtown and uptown, are unchanged. There is much for you to do in February and we want to encourage you to extend your stay into the week-end. The joy for living that you find in much of the South is very evident in New Orleans. You'll experience this joy in our food and our music, and in the people you meet.

In the French Quarter, where the Hotel Monteleone is located, you will find wonderful shops and restaurants, and historic homes and museums. You should consider a visit to the Historic New Orleans Collection on Royal St. (free), the 1850 House, and the wonderful Mardi Gras exhibit at the Presbytere (both part of the Louisiana State Museum Complex off Jackson Square). Often on week-ends you can find

### Fun in the Big Easy

The **SERA** board had its annual fall meeting at the beautiful Hotel Monteleone last month. Trust me, from first hand experience I can tell you the French Quarter has recovered. Obviously, other parts of the area are still devastated, and our thoughts are still with those who were displaced and still recovering, but as far as the heart of New Orleans is concerned the party is still going strong!



free live music performances at the New Orleans Jazz National Historic Park or the Louisiana Music Factory. You can also easily walk to Snug Harbor, the House of Blues, and other music clubs from the Hotel Monteleone.

Other ideas? Relax in the courtyard of the historic Napoleon House, take a carriage ride through the French Quarter, or go on a Haunted History walking tour. A short walk or streetcar ride away you can visit the Audubon Nature Institute: Aquarium of the Americas, the Children's Museum in the warehouse district and the world-class Audubon Zoo. A short (free) ferry ride away you can visit Blaine Kern's Mardi Gras World in Algiers, just across the river from the French Quarter. Mississippi River cruises are also available. We in New Orleans welcome you. Your support means a lot to the residents of New Orleans. You can find more information by visiting the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau website <http://www.neworleanscvb.com/>

*Laissez les bons temps rouler*

[Sonya Carr](#)

If you decide to join the board for Mardi Gras festivities (we have a meeting bright and early Wednesday morning), and you are driving to New Orleans, be warned that the French Quarter closes to traffic early Tuesday morning. So either drive and park Monday night, or wait until Wednesday. In any case, party safe, use the buddy system, and remember those myspace/facebook pics may come back to haunt you...

"To lead people, walk beside them ... As for the best leaders, the people do not notice their existence. The next best, the people honor and praise. The next, the people fear; and the next, the people hate ... When the best leader's work is done the people say, 'We did it ourselves!'"  
Lao-Tsu



Robert M. Capraro,  
Texas A&M  
University

"The closer people are to 'getting it right,' the more significant become the ways in which they 'get it wrong.'  
William R. Robinson

Rumor has it that there might be a big dinner planned for Wednesday or Thursday night. You'll have to pay your own way, and the place it not fast food cheap, but at least you'll get a chance to schmooze with faculty in a non-conference setting. That said, get your list of non-shop conversation topics going now, such as sports, gardening, cars, cooking, etc.



## Program Chair

Planning for the 2007 Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA is well underway. Despite all of the rumors surrounding hurricane Katrina and the status of the city, I can assure you - - it is all untrue. I visited the city September 21-23 and it was in great condition. The restaurants were marvelous and the casinos were up and running (I heard). We have a wonderfully diverse set of proposals submitted to the conference this year. We received 270 proposals from 233 unique first authors that account for 312 persons listed with authorship. Our division chairs are hard at work making sure that all of the proposals receive a fair review. The results from these reviews will be made available to you by the first full week in November and the program ready for review before people leave for Winter Break.

We are excited to have two training

Finally, the graduate students are having a get-together of their own. On Friday night, we will make the short trek to the infamous Mid City Bowling Lanes for a night at the Rock 'N' Bowl. I know, it sounds crazy, but where else can you do the Cajun two-step between frames while snacking on fried alligator sausage? Huh?!? So if you are a graduate student, and already making plans for the conference, save a spot for Friday night. No, you don't have to bowl, but I'm betting you will once you get there! See you there! [Kevin Kalinowski](#)

sessions this year presented by two distinguished professors. Our full day training session on *Constructivist Inquiry in Practice* by Dr. Yvonna Lincoln will close the conference (full day \$60) and *How to Publish in Scholarly Journals* (half day \$30) by Larry G. Daniel, Robin K. Henson Anthony Onwuegbuzie, and Bruce Thompson open the conference. You may only register for the training sessions with paid conference attendance. We have already had an overwhelming response for these training sessions so register early. We will also have several workshops offered at no additional costs: *Getting to Know SERA*, *Theoretical Framework or Literature Review: Getting it Right, R*, and *Getting Your First Job and Not Just the First Job you Get*.

I look forward to seeing each of you this year in New Orleans. We hope to make it another wonderful event for SERA members.  
[by Robert M. Capraro](#)

Division	Submitted
I. Educational Administration, Policy, Leadership, & Program Evaluation	76
II. Instruction, Learning & Cognition	41
III. Methodology, Measurement & Evaluation	33
IV. Teachers & Teacher Education	37
V. Special Populations & Counseling	20
VI. Graduate Student Seminars for Work in Progress	63



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## Presidential Speaker – W. James Popham

Professor Emeritus, UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies



W. James Popham has spent the bulk of his educational career as a teacher. His first teaching assignment, for example, was in a small eastern Oregon high school where he taught English and social studies while serving as yearbook advisor, class sponsor, and unpaid tennis coach. That recompense meshed ideally with the quality of his coaching.

Most of Dr. Popham's teaching career took place at UCLA where, for nearly 30 years, he taught courses in instructional methods for prospective teachers as well as courses in evaluation and measurement for graduate students. At UCLA he won several distinguished teaching awards. In January 2000, he was recognized by *UCLA Today* as one of UCLA's top 20 professors of the 20th century. (He notes that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a full-length century, unlike the current abbreviated one.) In 1992, he took early retirement from UCLA upon learning that emeritus professors received free parking.

Because at UCLA he was acutely aware of the perishability of professors who failed to publish, he spent his non-teaching hours affixing words to paper. The result: over 25 books, 200 journal articles, 50 research reports, and 175 papers presented before research societies. Although not noted in his official vita, while at UCLA he also authored 1,426 grocery lists.

His most recent books are *Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know*, 4th Ed. (2005) and *Assessment for Educational Leaders* (2006), Allyn & Bacon; *The Truth About Testing: An Educator's Call to Action* (2001) and *Test Better, Teach Better: the Instructional Role of Assessment* (2003), ASCD; *America's "Failing" Schools: How Parents and Teachers Can Cope with No Child Left Behind* (2005) and *Mastering Assessment: A Self-Service System for Educators* (2006), RoutledgeFalmer. He encourages purchase of these books because he regards their semi-annual royalties as psychologically reassuring.

In 1978, Dr. Popham was elected to the presidency of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). He was also the founding editor of *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, a quarterly journal published by AERA. He has attended each year's AERA meeting since his first in 1958. He is inordinately compulsive.

In 1968, Dr. Popham established IOX Assessment Associates, an R&D group that formerly created statewide student achievement tests for a dozen states. He has personally passed all of those tests, largely because of his unlimited access to the tests' answer keys.

In 2002 the National Council on Measurement in Education presented him with its Award for Career Contributions to Educational Measurement. In 2006 he was awarded a Certificate of Recognition by the National Association of Test Directors. Dr. Popham's complete 42-page, single-spaced vita can be requested. It is really dull reading.

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## Membership News

**Mary Margaret Capraro** was promoted from Associate Clinical Professor to Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education in Teaching, Learning, and Culture Department at Texas A & M University.

**Robert M. Capraro** was promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor of Mathematics Education in Teaching, Learning, and Culture Department at Texas A & M University.

**Sharon Chambers** recently changed positions and is now interim Associate Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at A&M-Commerce.

**Dannielle Joy Davis**, Assistant Professor at the University of Texas at Arlington, presented her research on college student socialization at the College Teaching and Learning Conference in Venice, Italy, where she won a Best Paper Award. She also was granted the Outstanding Achievement Recognition Award by the national organization, Sisters of the Academy Institute, in honor of her contributions as an emerging scholar in the field.

**Mike Desiderio** was promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor and received tenure at Texas A&M University –Kingsville. Dr. Desiderio also took on the role as Interim Chair of the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling.

**Kathleen Mittag**, University of Texas at San Antonio, was promoted from Associate Professor to Full Professor.

**Gil Naizer**, Texas A&M Commerce, is serving as Interim Assistant Dean of the College of Education and Human Services.

**Kyle Roberts** moved from Baylor College of Medicine to Associate Professor at Southern Methodist University.

**Cynthia A. Warren**, Doctoral Student at the Institute for Obesity Research, Department of Nutrition and Food Science Texas A&M University, received funding for her dissertation project from Food and Nutrition Service to conduct research to increase the consumption of whole grain foods in schools. Cynthia also collaborated with scientists and engineers from the research community and received funding to develop a curriculum based on the "Foods for Health" research program at Texas A&M University and three other land grant universities.

**Chris Wike** and **Kim Nimon** received their Ph.D.'s in Applied Technology and Performance Improvement from the University of North Texas.

**Linda Reichwein Zientek** moved from Blinn College to Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Sam Houston State University. She received the 2007 Teaching, Learning, and Culture Dissertation of the Year Award from Texas A&M University.

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## Membership News

### Thompson Presents 2007 Mid-Western Educational Research Association Keynote Address

Bruce Thompson, Distinguished Professor, Texas A&M University, recently presented the Keynote Address at the 2007 annual meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association (MWERA) in St. Louis. Thompson's address was titled, "Standards in Conducting and Publishing Research in Education," and is available at:

<http://www.coe.tamu.edu/~bthompson/mwera.htm>

In his address, Thompson considers the prospects for improvement and reform of the American Educational Research Association. The address builds on recent reports, including Arthur Levine's 2007 study, *Educating Researchers*:

[http://www.edschools.org/EducatingResearchers/educating\\_researchers.pdf](http://www.edschools.org/EducatingResearchers/educating_researchers.pdf)

and the new, 2006 Standards of the American Educational Research Association. The emergence of the new Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness is also considered:

<http://www.educationaleffectiveness.org/pages/about.shtml>

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## Book Review

Henry, R. J. (Ed.). (2006). *Faculty development for student achievement: The QUE project*. Bolton: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.

This book addresses the conditions of "increasingly fragmented" college student attendance, enrollment patterns at higher education institutions (HEI), and the characterization of collegiality that is absent in HEIs. Dr. Henry (2006) focused his description of this seven-year "Quality in Undergraduate Education (QUE) project" on three areas; (a) "managing student transitions" (p. xi) within and between two and four-year institutions; (b) the faculty-to-faculty discourse that occurred within each of the five disciplines (biology, chemistry, English, history, and mathematics); and (c) the need to shift "higher education's collective attention toward standards for student achievement" (p. xii). Thus, it served as a catalyst for bringing faculty together at local and national levels to concentrate their efforts on "professional obligations to their academic disciplines and to their students." Comprised of faculty from 21 two- and four-year institutions in four states across the nation, this project has produced results that have continued to be realized three years after the project's funding ceased in April 2004.

Dr. Henry's opening statement in the introduction pinpointed the use of "learning outcomes as a means to stimulate conversation among faculty," which seemed most fitting for this project. This focus places students' learning needs at the center of discourse among

faculty within each discipline to improve faculty performance at the departmental and national levels (p. 1). Resulting from this dialogue, three important themes emerged in this chapter: (a) postsecondary education reform cannot occur without the “faculty’s willing participation,” (p. 2) (b) assessment is an integral piece to making curricular changes within a program of instruction, and (c) student diversity is continually increasing, emphasizing the need for faculty development.

The author included two other substantial items (the four-stage QUE conceptual framework and the “super matrix”), which identify the level that each examined course contributes to each learning outcome. Having worked with curriculum maps to align course curricula, the *super matrix* (a chart that lists the “outcomes for each course vertically, with rows for the courses, which receive scores according to the level of the contribution made”) seems to be a simple and effective tool for curriculum design and alignment (p. 19).

A description of the semi-annual national meetings revealed questions that the faculty were faced with; “What comes first—the course or the outcomes? How do outcomes affect curricula? What should be the ratio of content to skills in outcome statements?” (p. 29). One emergent theme in both chapters was the temporary participation in QUE by some IHE’s for a various reasons (e.g. funding, administrative decisions, and faculty turnover), which presented challenges to the cluster groups in maintaining continuity among its faculty members throughout the project. This theme represents the dynamic nature inherent in higher education and how IHEs must deal with that reality.

Chapters 4 through 8 consisted of members’ perspectives about the each group’s experiences. Presenting these discipline-specific views allows readers to compare and contrast each perspective to guide how best to implement the strategies described. Chapter 9 provided an excellent summary of the project’s successes with a descriptive list of recommendations for ensuring success by using actual comments from some of the QUE participants.

In closing, the QUE project serves as a primer for things to come with respect to putting two- and four-year faculty at the center of continuous collaboration towards student achievement. Knowledge of this project prior to designing my pilot case study for revealing links between faculty development and student achievement would have been useful in developing the questions asked during interviews with administrators and faculty. This book is a “must read” for provosts, department chairs, deans, and faculty, and would be beneficial as a required or supplemental text in courses covering curriculum and program assessment, and college teaching.

*Robert Elliott is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Higher Education at Texas Tech University. His area of study is on the assessment of faculty development on student learning outcomes.*

## **Research Study on Handheld Use by Administrators**

by Dr. Ronald Styron, USM; Dr. Kyna Shelley, USM; and Karen Fasimpaur, K12 Handhelds

The University of Southern Mississippi has been a pioneer in the field of using handhelds for administrative leadership. Each year they host a School Leadership Institute for building-level school administrators in Mississippi. One part of that institute focuses on using handhelds as a tool for time management, classroom observation, student records management, and other tasks.

Drs. Ronald Styron and Kyna Shelley are now conducting a research study on handheld use by school administrators.

The purpose of the study is to evaluate school leaders' opinions about and their use of personal digital assistants or handheld computers. There is some research to suggest that PDAs are viewed as making the job of school leader a more efficient undertaking. Likewise, efficient and effective leadership has been associated with stronger school performance.

If you are a K-12 school administrator, they need your input for this research (whether or not you use handhelds). The survey is online (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=154743616028>) and should only take about 10 minutes to complete.

Please help spread the word about this study by writing about it in your own blog, newsletter, or other publication.

Thanks in advance for your valuable assistance.