



Message from the President



This past October, Division 15 held its inaugural Advances in Educational Psychology Conference (see more details and links in this newsletter). This conference was highly successful, bringing together doctoral students and scholars to address some of the central concerns that both bind and divide us. Participants came ready to discuss and debate important concepts, procedures, and theoretical tensions across two days in the topical strand of their choice: Research into Practice, Technology in the Classroom, Principles and Mechanisms of Change, or Cultural and Social Influences in the Classroom. We also interacted with two stimulating plenary speakers who addressed the application and future of educational research. The goals of this conference included creating synergy among those who come from multiple viewpoints and areas of expertise, as well as to encourage new directions in these and other areas – directions that might involve forming research teams; seeking funding; and impacting our journals, newsletters, and social media sites. Each set of strand facilitators is now following up with participants and the energy continues to grow.

It was an honor to open AEPC with a short presentation. In doing so, I charged our participants to:

- engage in integrative, interdisciplinary thinking fueled by research and theory (while continuing to treat competing viewpoints with thoughtfulness and respect, and recognizing the important contributions made by competing theories in advancing our thinking and research);
- use what Boyer (*Scholarship Reconsidered*, 1990) called a vital asset to the academy and the world: “the probing mind of the researcher...unfettered by unnecessary theoretical and research constraints”; and focus on what Dubin (*Theory Building*, 1978) called “finding out,” with a “willingness to ask open questions unhampered by the prior constraints of a particular view or method”;
- and to ask: what do the findings across research and theories in your strand mean? Furthermore, how can we – together – integrate this research in ways that go beyond what we can do alone, or from a single perspective, in impacting education pre-K to gray?

In short, I asked our participants to consider “the power of and.”

One long-enduring, false dichotomy that continues to engage our field, and which helps illuminate “the power of and,” is a forced choice between instructed and constructed knowledge. We often hear that learning to read and write should parallel how we learn to talk – and that learning to talk is a natural process rather than an instructed, scaffolded process. The importance of a rich environment and active involvement of the child in language development is clear. Those, however, who have raised or loved a baby have also observed how everyone around that baby contributes

Inside This Issue

1 Message from President

3 Interview with Sandra Graham

6 Highlights from Executive Committee Meetings

7 Calls for Nominations

8 Announcements for the 2015 APA Convention

9 Reflections on the 2014 AEPC

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Message from President, cont'd.

to language development. Total strangers will make noises for babies to hear and imitate, prompt babies to copy words, and so on; adults and peers interact with babies and young children in hundreds of ways from birth through childhood to help support learning to speak and language development. There is perhaps no more explicitly scaffolded and supported learning experience for most of us in our lives!

As educational psychologists continue in their commitment to impact education from pre-K to gray, increased consideration of how constructed *and* instructed learning work together will enable us to move forward in new, innovative ways to address the complex challenges in learning and development that are faced by communities, families, teachers, and students. Similarly, other false dichotomies – such as qualitative versus quantitative methods (and/or single case design), teacher centered vs child centered, or theory x versus theory y – can be transformed into complex responses to complex issues. What avenues for “the power of and” do you see ahead, and how will they affect your work and contributions to the field?

Karen Harris

APA Division 15 President, 2014-2015

AEPC Success

Division 15 is pleased to announce the success of its inaugural Advances in Educational Psychology Conference (held October 24-25, 2014 in Fairfax, VA). The event – which was designed to explore the contributions of educational psychology and the future of our field – was well attended, with discussions running both wide and deep.

Findings and future directions from the event will be made available on the Division 15 website shortly. Those who wish to view photos from the event may do so on [Flickr](#) or [Facebook](#).

Please contact Wade George (wade.george@apadiv15.org) if you have any questions or would like specific details!



HISTORIAN INTERVIEW

Dr. Sandra Graham

By Persis Driver, Christopher Biltz, and Revathy Kumar



Dr. Sandra Graham received the E.L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award in 2013. She is the 50th recipient of this award and first African American woman to do so. As Historian for Division 15, I was privileged to have a conversation with Dr. Sandra Graham a week before she gave the invited address for APA's Division 15 at the annual APA 2014 convention. Persis Driver and Christopher Biltz, graduate students at the University of Illinois and University of Toledo, respectively, collaborated with me in documenting the highlights of our conversation for the Division 15 Newsletter.

Becoming a Professor

Sandra was a History major in college, so we began with questions about how she moved into Psychology. Sandra shared her initial foray into education, admitting, "There were no black teachers in the school, and so they seized an opportunity to hire a black woman with no experience teaching. Primarily, I think, [I was expected] to be a role model for the kids." As her career unfolded, Dr. Graham transitioned from teaching in Massachusetts to graduate school in California, focusing on child development. "I wanted to go back to graduate school to study child development, maybe motivation theory. I just knew intuitively that these Black kids are really smart. They have competencies, but somehow it is not coming together for them, and that's a question of motivation."

Sandra enrolled at UCLA, and early in her academic program attended a course taught by Bernie Weiner, a course she referred to as "the start of everything." This early catalyzing experience proved to be a prominent moment in defining the trajectory of her career. "I knew that this was what I wanted to study. I wanted to be a motivation theorist and study attribution theory. This was in part because I had come to realize the importance of understanding the achievement challenges of African-American adolescents, and that my quest could be informed by understanding the kinds of causal attributions they make for their success and failure."

Scholarly Influences

Sandra spoke openly about her collaborations with Dr. Bernard Weiner, also a past recipient of the E. L. Thorndike Award. "I wouldn't be the thinker I am without Bernie. He taught me how to think as a researcher." Dr. Weiner's impact on Sandra Graham is unmistakable. His commitment to attribution theory, social motivation, and research design are expanded upon in Sandra's work. Yet, Sandra also noted how John Coie, Ken Dodge, and Steven Asher were highly influential in her thinking about peer relationships and aggression. More recently, Sandra has been thinking about the contemporary work of political scientist Gary Orfield on school racial segregation. "His descriptive work is so important for understanding the nature of the phenomenon (of racial segregation)."

Ideology

Sandra spoke extensively about how attribution theory is an ideological focal point for her thinking. She shared her insight on the role of this theory in her work. "I am never going to lose sight of attribution theory, but it can't be the guiding principle for everything. Some of the things that I want to study about the benefits

of diversity really don't have anything to do with the causal attributions of kids or decision makers. I can't just limit my work to attribution theory, but it's always going to be there in some way, shape, or form."

Sandra elaborated on how attribution research can be most beneficial to society, and specifically for the lives of the African American children in our schools today. "We do need to understand aggression, low achievement, and the over-representation of African American youth in the juvenile justice systems while not studying the development of minority youth from a deficit perspective." Sandra emphasized that the problems facing African American youth exist beyond the individual level and pervade more complex structural issues. She has been working to influence policies and policy-makers who employ a top-down approach to social reform. "Part of the problem of addressing issues that come to African American youth is their causal attributions. But it is also structural variables. I want to focus on teachers who are decision makers in the school context and raise their consciousness about the kinds of behaviors they engage in that are motivated by their own unconscious stereotypes about African American youth."

In continuing to discuss structure and administrative policy Sandra also cited the importance of group representation in achieving diversity. "The most important work that I've ever done that has to do with policy and that is trying to document and understand how school ethnic diversity matters. There is an imbalance of power between these numerical minority and majority groups. When you have complete and full diversity, all the groups are equally represented."

After discussing where the field should be going, we also talked about how scholars in Division 15 can get there. Eliminating bias is certainly a laudable goal, but it will not be easy to achieve. Sandra suggested that we develop interventions that go beyond teaching students how to respond to bias, and teach decision-makers who unconsciously are creating barriers for African American youth in education. "We need serious, long-term, multifaceted intervention approaches to address implicit biases or how they affect the way decision makers treat African American youth. It can be done, but it's not going to be a one-shot intervention."

New Research Directions

Sandra is widely known for her work highlighting a need for interventions that change the behavior and social skills of youth of color who are labeled as aggressive. Working towards this goal, she and her students have created an intensive intervention program, Best Foot Forward, aimed at changing intentionality and responsibility attributions for academic achievement among African American youth. Yet, this is a scholar who is not resting on her laurels.

Sandra has new grants and emerging scholarship that is likely to follow some of the very goals she suggests for the field as a whole. Over the next ten years, she hopes to continue implementing Best Foot Forward and to write a book that would integrate the work that she and other researchers have been conducting on the psychosocial benefits of school cultural diversity.

Advice for Emerging Scholars

Sandra provided three clear directions for emerging scholars. First, she highlighted the importance of following personal passions – desires that are almost always stimulated by salient life experiences. Second, she highlighted the importance of being true to one's basic core values when choosing what to study. Sandra contrasted her advice with the challenges faced by individuals who might enter a profession because it seems

lucrative, fashionable, or aligns with greater job prospects. Individuals focused on external criteria often find it difficult to sustain their motivation because they lack a passion for the work. Finally, Sandra emphasized the need for emerging scholars to be methodologically and analytically sophisticated because the problems in this field are very complicated and hence require advanced knowledge of research methods. Everyone in our field, Sandra notes, should be conversant in quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies, even if they develop a preference for one of these styles of research.

Vision for Division 15

Looking into the future, Sandra also noted how Division 15 could take a proactive approach to including more scholars of color. As a career-long member of APA's Division 15, Sandra was well aware of many of the steps taken by APA's Division 15. As a past member of the Executive Committee, current Chair of the Publications Committee, and recipient of the 2013 E. L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award, Sandra has been an obvious and visible leader in moving the field forward. Co-leading the Social and Cultural Influences in the Classroom strand during the Division 15's inaugural Advances in Educational Psychology Conference, Sandra worked with early, mid, and late career scholars to think deeply about how to advance these themes. Joining others in the Division, Sandra supported the work of scholars who are actively responding to changing demographics as we work to make our scholarship more appealing to culturally diverse groups of scholars. As a regular participant in the lively and vital activities of Division 15, Sandra notes improvements in how Division leaders attend to race and ethnicity as they identify professionals for leadership roles within the organization.

Earning the E. L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award

When Sandra was asked directly about her reactions to receiving the Thorndike Award, she spoke about its value to the field at large. "It is humbling to be in the company of those scholars who have gone before me. There are lots of emotions; gratitude, humility, and pride that go into being recognized this way. I am really proud to be the first African American woman to receive the Thorndike Career Achievement Award."

Stay Connected!

LISTSERV is a fantastic means of keeping in touch with Division 15's work – but far from the only outlet we use! Be sure to connect with us via the channels below to ensure that you never miss a Division 15 story:



[Facebook](#)
[Twitter](#)
[LinkedIn](#)
[Google+](#)
[Weekly Digest](#)



And, if you *do* need to update your LISERV settings due to a recent move or change of address, please use [this link](#).

DIVISION 15 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS: HIGHLIGHTS

Washington, DC
Marriott Marquis Washington DC Hotel, LeDriot Park Room
August 7, 2014, 3:00-4:00

Full minutes may be found [here](#).

- The Executive Committee adopted an investment policy that will allow the Division to transfer monies to different accounts. In particular, it will enable the Division to move funds to accounts that have higher investment yields. The investment policy is included in the minutes linked above.
- According to the Division's bylaws and policies, only those who are members of the APA and Division 15 may vote in elections, bylaw revisions, and other Division matters. Only elected members of the Executive Committee may attend Committee meetings.
- The Committee discussed concerns about the funding and goals of the Advances in Educational Psychology Conference. One of the recommendations that emerged was to provide time for doctoral student professional development.
- All division archives will be moved to a Google Apps for Business account for long-term storage. Decisions about storage needs will be made by George Wade and Secretary Ji Hong.

Fairfax, VA
Fairfax Marriott at Fair Oaks
Oct. 22nd and 23rd, 2014

Full minutes may be found [here](#).

- Karen Harris and Michele Gill have crafted a [proposal](#) to change the Treasurer line such that, by the 2016 - 2017 academic year, duties will be divided between a Past-Treasurer, Treasurer, and Treasurer-Elect.
- The Policy and Procedures Manual will be revised to better describe both the roles of graduate liaisons and the roles and appointments of Co-Chairs of Graduate Student Affairs.
- In an effort to reach out to more students, Graduate Student Affairs will work with Wade George to design an online student seminar this coming spring.
- The Committee approved the Division's 2015 budget. The proposed budget can be found [here](#), and the approved budget can be found [here](#).
- Michele Gill and Terri Thorkildsen are forming a financial planning committee and searching for members with the experience to provide long-term financial recommendations.
- Division 15 membership dues will increase \$35 for APA non-members, \$25 for APA members, and \$15 for student members in 2015.

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED

The Richard E. Snow Award for Early Contributions - Nominate or Apply By January 11, 2015

Division 15 seeks nominations and applications for the 2014 Richard E. Snow Award for Early Contributions.

The Richard E. Snow Award is given to an individual who has made what the committee judges consider to be a significant career contribution and completed his/her doctoral dissertation within the previous 10 calendar years. Specifically, a viable candidate would be no more than 10 calendar years past the date of completing his/her doctoral dissertation at the time of receiving the award. All nominees must fulfill this criterion to be considered, and also must be a member or affiliate of the Division at the time of the award consideration.

The official call and list of past recipients can be found [here](#). Send questions to Andrew Elliott, Chair (andy@psych.rochester.edu).

The Paul R. Pintrich Outstanding Dissertation Award - Nominate or Apply By December 31, 2014

Division 15 seeks nominations and applications for the 2014 Paul R. Pintrich Outstanding Dissertation Award.

The Paul R. Pintrich Division 15 Dissertation Award is given to an individual who finishes his/her doctoral dissertation within the previous two calendar years from when the award will be announced. The dissertation must be in the area of educational psychology, broadly defined, and the proposed recipient must be a member or affiliate of the Division at the time of the award consideration. The award consists of a plaque, a check for \$500, and a program time slot for an invited address at the annual meeting. The recipient gives his/her address and receives the plaque and check at the APA conference in the year following the announcement, thus allowing a full year for the preparation of the invited address.

The official call and list of past recipients can be found [here](#). Send questions to Co-Chairs April Taylor (ataylor@csun.edu) and David Wakefield (david.wakefield@csun.edu).

Have You Subscribed to The Weekly Digest?

Each Friday, Division 15 publishes a digest of high-impact education news curated from popular media sources during the week. Also included are important Division 15 announcements, opportunity for engagement, and a link to our critically acclaimed job board.

Learn more about the Weekly Digest (and subscribe) [here!](#)

Division 15 Officer Roles - Nominate or Apply By January 30, 2015

Division 15 seeks nominations (including self-nominations) for leadership roles within our organization. Nominations will be reviewed by the Nominations Committee in preparation for a Division-wide vote in the spring, and those elected will carry three-year terms spanning August 2015 - August 2018. Remember that only those Division 15 members who are also members of APA are eligible to run for office and to vote in this election. If you would like to be involved in this process, be sure to renew your 2015 membership as soon as possible.

Please send nominations to Terri Thorkildsen (thork@uic.edu) no later than January 30, 2015.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR THE 2015 APA CONVENTION

APA Convention 2015

APA Division 15 invites submissions for the 2015 APA Convention, to be held Aug. 6-9, 2015, in Toronto, Canada. Division 15 sponsors programming related to topics in the domain of Educational Psychology. Submissions for all types of presentations are encouraged. We encourage submissions from both basic and applied researchers. Special consideration will be given to proposals consistent with the [2015 Division 15 Presidential theme of Impacting Education P-K to Gray](#) in the following areas:

- (1) Educational psychology in the classroom
- (2) Educational psychology and public policy
- (3) Credible education research with emerging technologies
- (4) Cross-disciplinary applications of educational psychology
- (5) Diversity, human development, and educational psychology

The full call for convention proposals can be found [here](#).



2015 Doctoral Student Research Seminar

Division 15 (Educational Psychology) invites doctoral students who are members of the Division to apply to participate in the annual Doctoral Student Research Seminar, to occur before and during the 2015 APA Annual Convention in Toronto, Canada.

Selected students will meet with distinguished researchers, work with faculty to discuss their dissertation research and professional identity development, and socialize with distinguished faculty and soon-to-be colleagues. The seminar is free, and Division 15 will provide some meals and refreshments. Students will also receive a stipend intended to assist with the cost of travel and registration.

Selected participants are expected to attend all seminar and specified Division 15 events beginning no earlier than 6 p.m. on August 5, 2015, and ending no later than 1 p.m. on August 9 (convention dates are August 6-9, 2015). Applicants must be full-time doctoral students who are in the preliminary stages of their dissertation study. Students from institutions large and small and from all domains relevant to educational psychology are encouraged to apply.

The official call for applications is posted [here](#).

An Open Letter to TIME Magazine

In an open letter to Nancy Gibbs, TIME Editor, Thomas L. Good (Professor Emeritus, University of Arizona) addresses the magazine's "sensational cover, editorial statement and feature story that systematically question the value of American teachers who often work in less favorable conditions than their international peers." The President, Past-President, and President-Elect of Division 15 (Educational Psychology) of APA reviewed and endorse this letter responding to the TIME cover.

What do you think? Read the full letter [here](#).

REFLECTIONS ON THE 2014 AEPC

By Julia Houston Cunningham, Arizona State University

I was definitely part of something special! The first Advances in Educational Psychology Conference (AEPC) began with APA Division 15 President, Dr. Karen Harris, reminding attendees to think about “and, not or” — and we did. This unique conference, described by more than one attendee as the best conference they had ever attended, allowed us to choose one of four working strands that met multiple times as we developed practical plans to identify, then reach, the diverse people we hope to help through our work.

When I was a classroom teacher, I had always hoped “someone” was working to solve the big problems in education. When I began my doctorate, my goal was to become one of those problem solvers. I accepted the fact it would likely take years before I would be invited to solve the “big problems.” Amazingly, I did not have to wait years. AEPC was designed to bring together researchers at all levels of experience and interests to identify concerns, brainstorm possible solutions, and set up plans to take action now and long term.



As a second year doctoral student, I had already formed a picture of what conferences were all about. In my mind, “conferences” were like moving sidewalks, taking attendees from session to session to network, learn about current research, and take in as much information as possible before going home, exhausted! AEPC, however, turned that image on its ear. The conference was definitely intense, but it was more like a great weekend retreat where everyone is energized and looking forward to going home and carrying on the work!



As I reflected on AEPC, distinct differences between this conference and others became very clear, and I will share a few prominent points. For one, the pace of AEPC was a surprise. AEPC had a full schedule, with back to back sessions and every available moment utilized fully. Yet, the atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming. A second surprise was the amazing exchange of ideas. The format of AEPC’s strand work provided great opportunities to discuss issues

in-depth from many angles. The strand work was balanced with plenary sessions, poster sessions, and breaks which provided chances to talk informally across strands as well. It was common to see groups of students and all ranks of professors (assistant through emeritus) discussing concerns, problems, and solutions. My final surprise was that I did not “network” at AEPC. Instead, I became part of a network of like-minded people at all stages of their careers and with diverse, compatible interests. At AEPC, strand members worked closely on areas of personal interest and had chances to build a deep relationship foundation.



I would typically end a piece like this by stating that participating in AEPC 2014 was a once in a lifetime experience. Fortunately, the end of AEPC 2014 was only the beginning. APA Division 15 President-elect, Dr. Nancy Perry, ended our meeting with a charge to keep the work going – and we are.



Renew NOW To Prevent Lapse in Benefits

Division 15 is now accepting renewals for the 2015 calendar year. Remember that APA central membership is *not* required for Division 15 membership. Because the processing of applications typically takes 1-2 weeks, we *strongly* recommend renewing as soon as possible to prevent disruption of your Division 15 benefits.

Dues will increase in 2015, so now is the best time to renew!