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NEP/15

Educational Psychology

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Edited by Marcus Johnson

Message from the President



Having recently filed Division 15's annual report with APA, I can confidently report that a lot has happened in our division during the last 15 months. The membership committee formed the first cohort of 51 graduate student ambassadors from over

40 institutions, initiated the "One Tip" interview series on professional success, Free First Year and Lapsed Membership Campaigns, and wrote personalized recruitment e-mails. Our Communications Director, Wade George, also produces targeted social media advertising.

In terms of outreach to our own members, potential members, and educators, our *Psychology Today* blogs have produced over 129,000 total reads (53 posts). We have over 5,000 Facebook and 2,000 Twitter followers. The division also organized two webinars, one by Dan Hickey on situated cognition and one by Gale Sinatra on public understanding of science, which combined to engage hundreds of participants. Our International Committee awarded the first International Student Research award. The quantity and quality of proposals for the Early Career Research Grants increased, as did activities of the early career cohort.

Our program committee and various award committees have also been busy, recognizing the excellent research conducted by many of our members. It is important, though, for that research to make a difference in the lives of teachers and students. Building a bridge between theory and practice has been a concern of mine and many of the division's past presidents.

Bridging Research and Practice

Does our research make a difference? Some are doubtful, but I would argue yes, it has had some impact. For example go into many schools and you might see work informed by some of our past presidents, such as Bonnie Meyer's research on Text Structure Strategy Training, Karen Harris's work on writing and self-regulation, or Lauren Resnick's work on Accountable Talk (to give a few examples).

Nevertheless, the impact could be greater. Too often, practitioners implement research-based innovations without fidelity to the underlying psychological principles, implement only a piece of the innovation, or use techniques that are not research-based. It is therefore vital for practitioners to receive high quality professional development (PD) on research-based findings and practices.

"What we know about topics such as skill learning is that it takes time, reflective practice, feedback and coaching to proceduralized knowledge in a way where it will transfer to practice, including, in the case of teachers, classroom practice."

Yet the quality of PD in schools still remains quite poor. One-shot workshops still are the predominant PD delivery system in schools, which reflects a transmission model of education. Adults are learners too, and so PD also needs to reflect many of the same principle of learning that our field applies to Pre-12 education. (See, for example, *The Top 20 Principles from Psychology for Pre-12 Teaching and Learning* by APA's

Message from the President, cont'd.

Coalition for Psychology in Schools and Education.) What we know about topics such as skill learning is that it takes time, reflective practice, feedback and coaching to proceduralized knowledge in a way where it will transfer to practice, including, in the case of teachers, classroom practice. Teachers also need to experience the utility of what they learn in PD and be motivated to use it, and motivation is enhanced when teachers are treated like autonomous agents rather than passive recipients. Group learning is also quite important for teachers and other learners.

A Bridge Over Troubled Waters

This state of affairs is changing, albeit slowly. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are becoming more common in schools, on the premise that teachers can work together to reflect on problems of practice and engage in mutual problem solving. Research on the effectiveness of PLCs, however, is mixed; perhaps reflecting problems in implementation and fidelity to underlying principles. Nevertheless, there is increased recognition of the need to use more effective (and research-based) models of PD.

Another change is the increased use of the term *professional learning* in lieu of professional development. The new term may convey a more constructivist approach to PD (although that may depend on how the term is perceived and understood). I would like to see *professional learning* as a major focus of research in educational psychology, which is why it is part of my president theme, “Evidence-Based Change through Psychology, Policy, Professional Learning, and Participatory Practice.”

As part of this initiative, I will be curating a series of Psychology Today blogs on my presidential theme. I have also created two ad hoc committees to make recommendations to the division’s executive committee: one on educational policy and one on professional learning. Recently, these

committees jointly surveyed division members on their expertise and experiences related to these topics. The committees are currently analyzing these data and evaluating various options for future projects.”

“I would like to see professional learning as a major focus of research in educational psychology...”

There are many ideas on the table, but as an example, one option is to encourage more of our mid-career and senior members to publish their research in magazines and journals of the major professional organizations for administrator, curriculum specialists, and teachers, such as *Educational Leadership*, *Principal*, *NASSP Principal Leadership Magazine*, or *NEA Today*. These are not outlooks for publishing original empirical research but for disseminating research findings to practitioners. (Reaching administrators is key, as they most directly affect the content and structure of professional learning.) This strategy can reach a broad audience but a downside is that it still reflects a one-way transmission of information model. However, this strategy could be used to showcase models of effective professional learning and/or researcher-practice partnerships, to publicize APA resources (including website links), and build networks that involve reciprocal learning between parties.

This is a complex endeavor. This is why I have characterized it as building a bridge over troubled waters. The waters are troubled and choppy because of the many constraints under which practitioners work, the “watering down” of innovations, beliefs and practices not informed by research, distortions caused by political and financial incentives, and the multitude of problems that schools face. The bridges between research and practice need to be carefully crafted and sturdy. They need to be designed using scientific principles and a knowledge of

Message from the President, cont'd.

organizational dynamics so that they are sustainable and don't collapse. Finally, there must be room for traffic going in both directions, from researchers to practitioners and from practitioners to researchers, so we (as researchers) can learn what issues are important and what practices "work" in various local contexts.

Note: If you are engaged in a research-practice partnership involving intensive professional

development/learning and did not respond to the recent survey, please write to me at nussbaum@unlv.nevada.edu and let me know about your project. Some of these can be profiled as part of my presidential initiative.

- **E. Michael Nussbaum**
APA Division 15
President



Nominate or Apply for APA "Citizen Psychologist" Award

APA has announced an exciting new initiative to celebrate the work psychologists do to improve their communities. This can include public service, volunteerism, board membership and other strategic roles often not directly associated with the day-to-day work of psychologists in our careers. These individuals bring psychological science and expertise to bear on existing challenges to improve community well-being locally, nationally or globally.

If this description sounds familiar, we encourage you to nominate a colleague (or yourself!) for a Presidential Citation as an exemplary Citizen Psychologist. This is the highest honor available from the APA President. Nominees must be full APA members and hold a doctorate in psychology.

Learn more (and find nomination/application instructions) [here](#).

Conference/Convention Events and Announcements

Mentors and Reviewers needed for the 2018 Claire Ellen Weinstein Graduate Student Seminar!

Due to the sizable turnout of doctoral student applicants for the 2018 Claire Ellen Weinstein Graduate Student Seminar, the Graduate Seminar chairs are seeking reviewers to help in the selection process. Students who are selected will meet with distinguished researchers, work with faculty to discuss their dissertation research and professional identity development, and socialize with faculty and soon-to-be colleagues.

For those interested in serving as possible faculty mentors and/or reviewers, please contact Matthew Irvin (irvinmj@mailbox.sc.edu) and Teya Rutherford (taruther@ncsu.edu). The Convention dates are August 9th-12th, 2018.



Submit Your AERA Contributions for Division 15 Recognition!

As we prepare for AERA's Annual Meeting (Friday, April 13 – Tuesday, April 17, 2018 in New York, NY), we'd like to highlight the contributions of any attending Division 15 members via our annual "Division 15 at AERA" program. We encourage any who will be presenting work to share details via [this form](#).



Please note that all contributions must be received by April 1 to be included. Prior to the meeting, we will publish these contributions through Division 15's website, social media, and Weekly Digest. If you will be presenting with other members, please coordinate responses so that information is sent only once. You may submit multiple sessions.

Interview with Thorndike Award Winner Dr. Edward Haertel

Interview by Mei-Lin Chang, APA Division 15 Historian
Article by Mei-Lin Chang and Julie N. Healy



Dr. Edward Haertel received the E.L. Thorndike Career Achievement Award in 2016. He is the 53rd recipient of this award. The American Enterprise Institute named Dr. Haertel one of the 200 most influential national scholars who are shaping education policy

and practice. He is the former president of the National Council on Measurement in Education, a former vice president of the National Academy of Education, and a former chair of the National Research Council's Board on Testing and Assessment. He was invited to give an award address for APA's Division 15 at the annual APA 2017 convention. As Division 15 Historian, I was privileged to have a conversation with Dr. Edward Haertel. Julie Healy, a graduate student at Kennesaw State University, collaborated with me in documenting the highlights of our conversation for this Division 15 Newsletter.

Dr. Haertel is deeply interested in the ways tests are used and in particular with the logic of the interpretations that people make of test scores. His scholarly work in testing and assessment has brought an immense impact on the policy and practice of educational testing in the past few decades, including the creation and maintenance of California's school accountability system over the last 30 years, and helping with plans to meet the new requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015. The influence of his work can be traced back to as early as 1980 when he published "Construct Validity and Criterion Referenced Testing" in the *Review of Educational Research*. A few of Dr. Haertel's career highlights include:

- Serving on the committee producing the 1999 *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (co-sponsored by the American Educational Research Association, National Council on Measurement in Education, along with APA) .
- Participating in an interdisciplinary collaboration that produced the 2008 *Assessment, Equity, and Opportunity to Learn* (sponsored by the Spencer Foundation).
- Serving on the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and as chair of the NRC's Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA) which oversees the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

Greatest Challenges in Educational Policy Regarding Testing

Dr. Haertel described three major challenges he sees in educational policy when it comes to testing or interpreting test scores. First, the naïve expectations as to the accuracy and comprehensiveness of educational measurements as referenced in Braun and Mislevy's "Intuitive Test Theory" (Phi Delta Kappan, March 2005). He stated that policymakers often have "*naïve expectations that tests can measure anything and that any two tests with the same name can be equated with a little bit of equating magic and so on. Naïve expectations that we can make tests do things they really can't do.*" Second, the inability

Interview with Dr. Edward Haertel, cont'd.

to control how tests will actually be used and interpreted— “The *Standards* lay out a tidy process beginning with the specification of intended test score uses and interpretations, but once an assessment is out there in the world, it becomes an affordance that may be appropriated by any number of different actors for their own purposes.” ***“That makes it hard to assure that the uses of tests are justified by theory and empirical research.”***

Finally, he believes ***“there’s a huge problem of confirmationist bias and strong disincentives for publishers or policymakers to look closely at unintended consequences of test use”***. He urges Educational Psychologists in academic settings to dive in and do the work of looking to see what the consequences are when the tests get out there in the field.

Difficult Issues in Testing and Assessment Research

Dr. Haertel stated that standards-based score interpretation is a messy and difficult area. Policy makers rely heavily on cut scores defining categories like “basic,” “proficient,” or “advanced,” because these seem to answer the questions people want tests to answer—Is this student doing well enough? What percentage of students are meeting appropriate expectations? ***“The norm-referenced interpretations that we relied on for a long time don’t really answer the question of how good is good enough. They allow us to compare students to one another or locate students in scores distributions, but they don’t give us any kind of value judgment as to the quality of the work.”***

Unfortunately, a label like “proficient” carries a lot of surplus meaning—“It invites over-interpretations that cannot be justified on either theoretical or empirical grounds.” Dr. Haertel further argued that percent-above-cut statistics like “percent proficient”

can be seriously misleading when they are used to compare groups, examine trends over time, or still worse, used to look at trends in gaps *over time*.

“This can lead to interpretations driven by the arbitrary nature of the cut score. The methods of standard-setting and judgmental standard setting are problematic. It’s not going away, it keeps coming back. That’s been the most intractable technical problem I’ve dealt with in this arena.”

The Role of Educational Psychologists in the Discourse on Policy and Testing

Dr. Haertel assisted in the recent drafting of the [Position Statement on Standardized Testing](#) for APA Division 15 (April, 2017). He commends educational psychologists who work to inform educators about sound test use and interpretation. He also encourages us to get involved in shaping district and state testing policies. Those who work more closely with individual learners, especially those with special needs, should strive to stay informed about sound test use and, of course, adhere to sound testing practices in their own work. He believes that all of us can advocate for tests and testing practices informed by sound psychological science. He further urges those educational psychologists who work in universities ***“to engage in research to advance the field, especially in areas like accommodations for English language learners or students with disabilities, assessment of new constructs beyond traditional achievement measures, research on learning progressions, and formative assessments that capitalize on the affordances of digital technology in classrooms.”***

Scholarship: Shaping and Informing Public Policy

When asked about how his scholarship has shaped and informed public policy, Dr. Haertel recounted an event that may have led to the mention by the American Enterprise Institute. That was the Angoff Memorial Lecture he gave in 2013 at the National

Interview with Dr. Edward Haertel, cont'd.

Press Club in Washington, DC (*sponsored by the Educational Testing Service*). He delivered an address on the topic of Value-Added Models for teacher evaluation. He argued that a teacher effectiveness estimate generated using a Value-Added Model should be thought of as kind of derived test score, and as such, should be examined through the lens of psychometric theory, addressing its reliability and validity, in particular. He made a strong case that enthusiasm for value-added modeling was overblown and that there were serious risks of misuse and of unintended consequences.

In 2009, during the time Dr. Haertel served on the Board on Testing and Assessment (BOTA), he and the board members issued a letter report to then-Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, laying out some concerns over the Department of Education's proposed "Race to the Top" regulations. The next year, the grant competition that led to the creation of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and Smarter Balanced assessment consortia reflected the concerns in the BOTA report. ***"It echoed BOTA's call for multiple measures, for a theory of action explaining how the testing program is meant to improve education, for an evaluation plan, for accurate measurement in the extremes of the achievement distribution, and other matters. This is a case where the advisory board saw a need to insert some expertise, some of what we know about reliability and validity, into the discussion in policy circles. We were successful in delivering the right message at the right time, and we did have an effect on the shape of funding for these major consortiums."***

Dr. Haertel offered guidance for educational psychologists and shared his experience using research to influence educational policy. He remarked that he "wasn't sure at what career stage aspiring researchers should focus on trying to influence public policy." Reflecting on his own experience, he shared that in his doctoral training, he was fortunate to work closely with Professor

David E. Wiley at the University of Chicago on a study designed to directly inform public policy. He explained, "at that time, Congress was considering changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that would have based Title I fund allocations on an achievement-based criterion instead of a poverty-based criterion. Obviously, what each member of Congress wanted to know [was] whether her or his district would win or lose if such a change were enacted." Dr. Haertel assisted with a project that sought to answer that question using various data sources. A large part of the work was an extensive exercise in test linking and equating, building a common metric for achievement across different jurisdictions. He noted that the study was conducted before state NAEP had even begun, and long before all states were effectively required to participate in state NAEP data collections.

Dr. Haertel explained, however, that there are some popular misconceptions, even among social scientists, concerning the ways in which scientific research can or should influence policy. He recommends an NRC report on the topic, published in 2012, edited by Dr. Kenneth Prewitt, *Using Science as Evidence in Public Policy*. ***The report discusses various places that social science informs public policy***, as far back as the Coleman EEO report and Donald E. Stokes's book, *Pasteur's Quadrant*. The report indicates the paths by which scientific findings can influence policy discourse and suggests the picture is often more complicated than we think. Dr. Haertel added that recently, he began following the work of the *Frameworks Institute* (www.frameworksinstitute.org/), which he likes because they use social science methods to study popular opinions and ways to shape messages to shift popular opinions toward scientifically informed understandings. Ultimately, Dr. Haertel believes, ***"this is important work in connecting what we do in scientific work and psychological study to the world of policy and practice."***
The Call to Collaborate with Other Fields to Engage in Policy Discourse

Interview with Dr. Edward Haertel, cont'd.

Dr. Haertel believes it would be useful for those in educational psychology to collaborate with other disciplines to engage in policy discourse and to advance policy. He remarked that ***“measurement specialists might make some progress in finding and investigating unintended consequences of test uses just by remembering that school principals, teachers, and students are rational actors who are likely to respond to testing incentives in predictable ways.”*** He cautioned, “however, we ought not to rely on common sense alone, we can also turn to our colleagues in other academic disciplines, including sociology (e.g., Mehan, 1978, pp. 49–56, 2008; Young, 1958), anthropology (e.g., Goldman & McDermott, 1987), economics (e.g., Jacob, 2001), law (e.g., Pullin, 2005), and linguistics (e.g., Hill, 1994).” Dr. Haertel suggested that even though measurement has roots in psychology, the field could also benefit from closer contact with new developments in social psychology (e.g., Steele, 1997) as well as the cognitive and learning sciences (Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Gee, 2008; Mislavy, 1993). Similar to what he asserted in the article *“Getting the Help We Need”* in the *Journal of Educational Measurement* (2013), he recommended that within the field of educational research, educational psychologists might work to increase involvement with curriculum specialists, teacher educators, and others (e.g., Diamond & Cooper, 2007; Gipps, 1994; Smith & Rottenberg, 1991).

Educational Testing Trends and Their Influence on Classroom Practice

When asked to discuss future trends of educational testing and how such trends might influence classroom practice in the next 10 years, Dr. Haertel laughed, responding, “prediction is always risky.” However, “I see increasing resistance to reliance on test scores alone as the primary driver of education reform, and I find that resistance very encouraging.” For example, the State of California has implemented a new accountability system under ESSA that features a dashboard of multiple

indicators, resisting pressures to produce a simplistic, unidimensional ranking. Dr. Haertel believes that newer tests, like the ones developed by Smarter Balanced Consortium, really are better than their predecessors. He notes that there have been predictions for decades that some testing revolution was right around the corner, but he is doubtful that we’ll see radical, wholesale changes in classroom practices anytime soon. Dr. Haertel explains, “I was part of the panel that wrote the 2014 NRC report, *Developing Assessments for the Next Generation Science Standards*, where we laid out a lot of detailed recommendations, plus some examples of assessments that really point the direction toward a promising future. Many of those ideas are relevant to other disciplines, as well.” Dr. Haertel explained, “the work is there, how it is going to be picked up, how long it’s going to take to see real changes, I really don’t know, and I can’t guess where we will be 10 years from now.”

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Dr. Haertel’s Scholarship and Impact on Teacher Evaluation

Considering how his work has influenced the current teacher evaluation system and his hopes for continuing to inform policymakers on this topic, Dr. Haertel detailed significant collaborative endeavors. He explained, “my first serious involvement in teacher evaluation was in the late 1980s when I assisted Prof. Lee Shulman on his “Teacher Assessment Project.” We developed and piloted performance assessments intended as prototypes for the new *National Board for Professional Teaching Standards*.” Dr. Haertel was involved for a while in the technical advisory committee for the NBPTS, as well. More recently, he collaborated with Linda

Interview with Dr. Edward Haertel, cont'd.

Darling-Hammond on several papers looking at teacher value-added models. Dr. Haertel remarked, "I'm hopeful that policymakers' infatuation with value-added models has run its course, and that these models will be used more responsibly in the future, in ways that do not involve high stakes for individual teachers." Dr. Haertel believes that it will not do simply to return to the status quo ante. As found by the Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study funded by the Gates Foundation, classroom observations or student evaluations suffer from some of the same problems as value-added models, and are probably subject to many of the same biases. According to Dr. Haertel, "in a better world, we'd train teachers better, mentor them longer, treat them in a more professional manner, and foster teacher learning communities where nearly all teachers would flourish."

Advice for Young/Emerging Scholars

Dr. Haertel responded thoughtfully when asked to consider advice for emerging scholars and their engagement in policy discourse. "I'm not sure that all young/emerging scholars ought to be focused on becoming more engaged/involved in Educational Policy discourse. My advice would be to judiciously take on a little bit of professional service, carefully chosen—Young researchers should look for places they can learn as well as contributing." Dr. Haertel recalled advice he received early in his career from Lee Cronbach, his predecessor at Stanford. "He invited me to think about what I would learn and how I would profit from taking on things and that was immensely helpful advice." Dr. Haertel explained that it is ok to be a little self-interested when deciding what type of work to pick up. He advises young scholars to listen and learn, explore how you can help your local school district or serve on some state-level committee, develop personal connections so that when you have something you believe needs saying, you'll know whom to say it to. However, Dr. Haertel cautions young scholars, "be careful, developing a solid line of academic research is more important than getting quoted in the newspapers. Involvement in public policy can

take a lot of time. Sometimes, it leads to exciting new research questions, but often it places one more in the role of teacher than learner, and for early-career scholars especially, the learner role is the more important."

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Calls for Dissertation and Early Career Grant

Apply for an Early Career Grant!

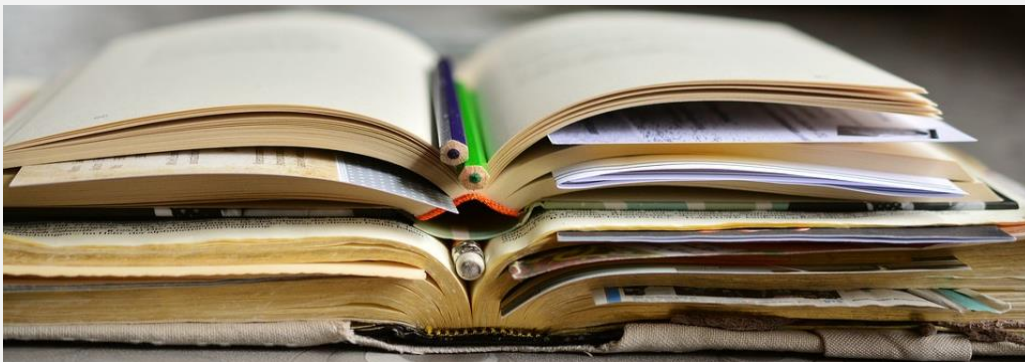
Division 15 invites applications for its 2018 Early Career Research Grants. Applicants must be early career professionals or researchers who are working in educational psychology and who are members of Division 15. The grant provides a monetary award of \$6,000 each for up to two selected applicants each year.

Completed applications should be submitted by no later than 11:59 (EST) on June 1, 2018. More information may be found in the official call, [here](#).

Dissertation Research Grants Available

Division 15 invites graduate students who are members or affiliates of the division to apply for a Dissertation Research Grant. The purpose of the grant is to provide financial support for educational psychology doctoral students preparing to collect their dissertation data. Two grants will be awarded, each including a \$1,000 stipend to be applied toward the student's dissertation research. Public announcement of the grant award winners will be made during the APA convention.

All applications must be submitted no later than May 1, 2018. Those interested will find a formal call and application instructions [here](#).



Share Your Division 15 Affiliation

If you've benefited from Division 15's diverse offering (including journal access, news, award eligibility, and more), please consider recommending affiliation to a colleague, student, or mentor! If every current Division 15 member brought one individual into the fold, membership would soar to its highest point in the history of our organization—and, the larger we are, the more we can impact the field.

Note that new enrollees' first year is free, and that APA Central affiliation is not required for Division 15 membership! Those interested may learn more (and apply for membership) [here](#).



Connect With Division 15!

Division 15 offers a wealth of ways to stay connected! In order to get the most from your membership, we strongly encourage you to connect via any of the following channels you routinely use:

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