



Consortium for Research on
Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation

www.createconference.org

The vision of the Consortium for Research on Educational Accountability and Teacher Evaluation (CREATE) is improved student learning, development, and achievement in PK-12 schools, institutes of higher education, and other educational settings.

CREATE

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Message From the President

Barbara B. Howard, Ed.D.
Appalachian State University

With the summer ending, our 2010 National Evaluation Institute (October 7 – 9) is approaching quickly! If you have not done so already, please be sure to register online as soon as possible to take advantage of our discount “Early Bird” specials! We have a special rate for graduate students to encourage them to take advantage of all the organization has to offer. (Space for our workshop offered by James Popham is limited! Please make sure your space is reserved soon!) The link is <http://www.createconference.org/registration10.html>

Make your hotel reservations by calling the Hospitality House at (757) 229-4020. Mention the CREATE NEI to receive the special conference room rate of \$129 per night. Rooms are limited, so you don't want to miss this rate!

We have accepted over 100 high quality proposals from presenters representing 23 states and three countries. With threads pulling together our three strands of evaluation of student performance, teacher evaluation, and program evaluation, we plan to offer many opportunities for engaging conversations among educators from across the country and beyond in these three key areas of education.

CREATE has offered invaluable networking opportunities to professionals across the country since its inception over two decades ago. It continues in that tradition. CREATE, as a member organization of the Joint Committee for Standards in Educational Evaluation (JCSEE), involves its membership directly in the important work of development and revision of three sets of standards issued by the JCSEE – student, personnel, and program. This year, the emphasis will be on the revision of the current Student Evaluation Standards. A core Task Force of writers representing the United States and Canada has begun the arduous task of totally revising the standards for student evaluation to reflect more appropriately the process of assessment of student learning by teachers in the classroom. Rather than tweaking current standards, this Task Force considered radical changes to the format, language, and audience of these standards. A session by members of this Task Force will provide additional information and opportunities for feedback. CREATE members will be encouraged to actively participate in the development of this set of standards as writers, reviewers, and, ultimately, users.

As always, the NEI promises to be one of the most rewarding professional conferences of its kind. It is not by accident that our membership continues to be loyal participants and presenters. Please share this newsletter with your colleagues and invite them to join you at our NEI 2010.

Plan now – the NEI 2011 will be held in lovely Oxford, Mississippi, on the campus of Ole Miss (the University of Mississippi) in October.

**Highlights of the 2010 National Evaluation Institute
Williamsburg, Virginia • October 7-9, 2010**

Theme: "Assessment and Evaluation for Learning"

**Dr. Thomas Guskey
University of Kentucky**

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

*Dr. James Popham
University of California Los Angeles*

**Dr. Yaling Sun
Yunnan Normal
University**

**DR. DIANE RAVITCH
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

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**Pre-
Conference
Workshop**

*Dr. Caroline Wylie
Educational Testing Service*

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY

**JASON
MILLMAN
AWARD
WINNER**

**Dr. James Stronge
The College of William and Mary**

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A Balanced Assessment System in Education: A Change Strategy for School Districts

**Marco Muñoz, Ed.D. –
Jefferson County Public Schools**

Across the nation, schools are adopting a new, comprehensive way of thinking about assessment. In the past two decades or so, at least for public schools, assessment was all about the end-of-year statewide testing. The obvious reason is that the statewide testing was part of the educational accountability system that we all felt responsible for. In the past decade or so, the idea was to come up with a way of benchmarking progress toward the end-of-year statewide testing so that we could do id-year adjustments. In some instances, this interim benchmark assessment would look like a periodic system with 3-6 intervals of time depending on the particular needs of school districts. Currently, however, the focus has been on the classroom assessment or Assessment for Learning in a balanced assessment system.

As defined by experts in assessment (Stiggins, 2008), a balanced assessment system is “an integration of classroom assessment, interim benchmark assessment, and accountability tests into a unified process that benefits student learning.” The danger that I see coming is that, although the Assessment for Learning has some good evidence of its effectiveness (Black & Wiliams, 1998), we cannot forget the value of the other types of assessments (i.e., interim benchmark assessment, accountability tests). A true balanced assessment satisfies information needs of users at different levels of the educational system.

One of my concerns when school districts launch a balanced assessment system is that we might forget the importance of developing a change strategy that will enable the implementation of this concept. Perhaps a key element is to provide information and build skills in assessment, something that we like to call “assessment literacy,” and that is about true understanding of key concepts like validity, reliability, and item analyses. Perhaps another key element is to consider the “emotional dynamics” of the assessment experience from the student perspective; having assessments without grading might help refocus the main objective of assessment: learning rather than mere performance. An additional element is associated with providing support to our teachers with “professional learning communities” that uses assessment data for guiding future instruction. This means rethinking the schedule to allow for common planning.

The last element that is essential in any discussion associated with balanced assessment systems is about a “bias for action.” All other elements can be in place (i.e., multiple types of assessments, assessment literacy, emotional dynamics of assessment, and professional learning communities), but if the assessment data is not used for making instructional decisions, we would still be in the “diagnostic” rather than a “prognostic” view of assessment. This prognostic approach would look different for the various types of assessments that make up a comprehensive balanced assessment

system. At the classroom assessment level is about finding where students are in the progression toward meeting standards so that teachers/students can know what comes next in the learning process. For the interim benchmark assessment, it is about teachers in professional learning communities using the assessment results to assess the effectiveness of instructional interventions on predefined academic standards. At the state level assessment, it is focused on accountability of learning so that guidance (and resources) can be provided to school leaders, policy-makers, and community leaders. It is ONE system with different users and uses, but with the clear focus on ensuring success to ALL students.

Publish Your Work with CREATE

**Submit your research for publication
in the
CREATE Newsletter!**

We welcome articles associated with educational evaluation and accountability. We prioritize articles presented at the annual National Evaluation Institute. Articles should be sent in electronic format and should be approximately two pages in length (singled spaced), Times New Roman, font 12.

Submit to: marco.munoz@jefferson.kyschools.us
or marita.white@jefferson.kyschools.us

Teacher Evaluation: How do we make it matter?

Barbara Howard, Ed.D.
Appalachian State University

The job of the k-12 school administrator is a conglomerate of some of the most complex tasks in a district, yet none is more critical than that of teacher evaluation. The ineptitude of an ineffective teacher can have unimaginably far reaching effects. With this weighty responsibility on their shoulders, why is it that principals and assistant principals struggle so mightily with the burden of teacher evaluation?

This conversation actually began decades ago. In 1981, Michael Scriven warned, "Teacher evaluation is a disaster. The practices are shoddy, and the principles are unclear" (p. 244). After a decade of some development in this area, McLaughlin observed in 1990, "In most school districts, the norms and expectations that surround teacher evaluation preclude a meaningful activity" (p. 404). Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, the majority of those practices revolved around the minimum possible expenditure of effort on the part of both the weary principal and the teacher – classroom observations. Fraught with dangerous pitfalls and failings, classroom observation was staunchly defended as what it was not – a valid means of evaluating the performance level of a teacher. Principals rushed from classroom to classroom (usually the last week of the deadline for submitting completed forms to the district office) checking off specific behaviors that the teachers, not their students, exhibited. These behaviors or "strategies" often failed to capture anything the students actually did or learned. Then we hit the age of accountability, and we had schools that were low performing on a variety of measures, except in terms of their teacher evaluation reports. Typically, these schools often boasted a faculty composed of "well above average" teachers.

The warnings from previous decades are clear. This is not some new clarion call for action. The 21st century, with all its standards and measures of accountability, has managed to encourage another look at the way we evaluate teachers. Under *No Child Left Behind* (2001), "highly qualified teachers" were not designated as such by their performance as educators but by the level of their preparation. In the *Race to the Top*, the latest federal school initiative, the move toward linking teacher performance (and, in some cases, pay and tenure) directly to test scores looms on the political horizon. While promoting this initiative as one geared toward teacher improvement, not teacher sanction, it still teeters dangerously close to the brink of relegating teacher performance to a quantifiable test score rather than a more complex and holistic measure of performance.

Teacher evaluation has evolved since the late 1980's to the use of rubrics, dossiers, portfolios, and interviews. The idea is to address some of the narrowness decried in the 20th century. In response to this evolution of practice, The Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (JCSEE) revised its earlier attempt in 1988 of addressing the weaknesses in personnel evaluation with the release in 2008 of the second edition of the *Personnel Evaluation Standards*. While not intended to promote a specific method of evaluation, the standards offer assistance to

anyone engaged in the practice of teacher evaluation. For those who develop systems of teacher evaluation, these standards offer a means of validating the process to ensure that such issues as service orientation, explicit criteria, and evaluator quality are addressed in the front end. Principals then would not be left to develop their own shortcuts that may result in short circuiting an otherwise helpful system. By applying these standards as they are intended, clear principles with meaningful activities result in what all personnel evaluations are intended to do – support school goals by improving the quality of the teachers. Without attention paid to the basic practices and principles upheld in these standards, both developers and principals run the risk of continuing with practices that teachers view as worthless and as being something to endure rather than an opportunity to be seized (Wolf, 1973; Johnson, 1990).

References

- Johnson, S. M. (1990). *Teachers at Work: Achieving success in our schools*. New York: Basic Books.
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- McLaughlin, M. W. (1990) *Embracing Contraries: Implementing and sustaining teacher evaluation*. In J. Millman & L. Darling-Hammond (Eds) *The New Handbook of Teacher Evaluation: Assessing elementary and secondary school teachers* (pp.403-415). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
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Building partnerships that work: On-site teacher preparation classes

Drs. Trudy Clemons and Carrie Germeroth
Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning
(McREL)

The bell rings at one of the largest urban high schools in Denver, Colorado. The typical sounds of teens socializing flow into the classroom from the hall, where students sit in doorways eating lunch. A faculty member from Metropolitan State College of Denver (MSCD) stands at the front of the class, but he is not teaching high school students. The students in this classroom are enrolled in EDS 3210: Standards-Based Curriculum, Planning, and Management, part of MSCD's Urban Teacher Preparation (UTP) program. The program focuses on strategies to significantly improve the achievement of students in high-need urban schools, as well as strengthen effectiveness of teachers being prepared to teach in these schools. Gathered in a circle, desks backed against the wall, the UTP students work on developing a discipline plan that corresponds to state law and conforms to the school-wide management plan. Three selected readings from contemporary media are passed around the room; the students pour over them, anxious to learn more about the emerging classroom issue of harassment and cyber bullying.

Teachers often see the time spent in the field gaining hands-on experience as one of the most powerful components of their teacher preparation program (Allen, 2003). However, research suggests that field experiences are often disconnected from the coursework and not well-coordinated with the college-based components of the teacher preparation program (Guyton & Byrd, 2000; National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 1996). In this classroom in an urban high school, however, purposeful connections between the curriculum and school culture are ever present, while future teachers discuss bullying policies that may one day impact the students in the hall.

Innovative approaches to align field experiences and coursework, such as this teacher preparation course taught on site, have proven successful for Metropolitan State College of Denver in three partnering Denver Public Schools (DPS). The MSCD faculty began holding teacher preparation classes on site in the 2008–2009 school year and see them as a means to (1) cultivate a partnership with schools who host field experience students and student teachers, (2) strengthen the alignment of the coursework with the field experiences, and (3) increase pre-service teachers' understanding of the school context.

Not surprisingly, the on-site class facilitates better communication between the school and MSCD faculty. As the MSCD faculty members became increasingly involved in the schools, they were seen as valuable collaborators and members of the school team. This level of visibility allows the college faculty to be viewed as competent classroom educators and helps administrators and teachers in the school see the value of the university-school partnership (Colbert & Wolff, 1992). In addition, placing students in their field experiences at a partnering school has proven to be much easier because students are in the school weekly, and their supervising faculty member is just a short walk away down the hall.

In one of the partnering schools, the MSCD faculty member cultivated a strong relationship with leadership on several levels. In addition to teaching his on-site course, he conducted a site-based research project analyzing the outcomes of heterogeneous learning in this urban high-needs high school. The outcomes of his study will be used by the school's leadership to strengthen content and course offerings and in academic advisement to ensure that more students (especially low-income, first-generation students of color) have access to a curriculum that will prepare them for success in college.

This model of holding teacher preparation classes on site in partnering schools has proven to be beneficial in the UTP program at MSCD. In order to establish this practice, the UTP program first built strong relationships with the partnering schools and identified committed staff within the schools at MSCD. Once the partnerships were solidified and the staff were brought on board, this model benefitted everyone involved—the UTP students, the schools, and the MSCD faculty. The UTP program will continue to foster these relationships and involve partners in discussions to develop additional innovative practices to increase the level of preparedness of teachers entering urban schools, so that every child in every classroom will have a well-prepared teacher.

References

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- Colbert, J. A., & Wolff, D. E. (1992). Surviving in urban schools: A collaborative model for a beginning teacher support system. *Journal of Teacher Education, 43*(3), 193–199.
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- National Council of Teachers of English. (1996). *Guidelines for the preparation of teachers of English Language Arts*. Urban, IL: Author.

Registration

National Evaluation Institute
October 7 – 9, 2010
The College of William & Mary*
Williamsburg, Virginia

Register online at
www.createconference.org
or use this form

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

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Mailing Address: _____

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Please indicate any special needs (e.g., motor, sensory, dietary): _____

REGISTRATION OPTIONS	On or before August 1	After August 1	Graduate Student (Include copy of Student ID)
Pre-Conference Workshop with Dr. James Popham – ONLY • Thursday, October 7, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Lunch included. • Does NOT include conference registration.	___ \$200	___ \$225	___ \$100
Conference & CREATE membership ONLY** • Does NOT include Pre-Conference Workshop	___ \$200	___ \$225	___ \$100
CREATE membership ONLY	___ \$60	___ \$60	___ \$50
BEST VALUES			
COMPREHENSIVE PACKAGE: Pre-Conference Workshop, Conference Registration, and CREATE membership**	___ \$300	___ \$325	___ \$150
MULTIPLE PARTICIPANTS Discounted Fee: Comprehensive Package** • 4 or more registrations submitted at once • Complete a separate registration form for each participant and mail all registrations together	___ \$250/person	___ \$275/person	N/A
Guest Rate • Includes attendance at conference reception (Thurs.) and breakfasts (Fri. & Sat.).	___ \$25	___ \$35	N/A

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____

Method of Payment--Payment is due with the registration form.

Enclosed is check no. _____ payable to "CREATE" (Please write registrant's name on memo line.)

Enclosed is Institutional Purchase Order No. _____

Charge to the following credit card: VISA MasterCard

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Card No.: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____ (Credit-Card Registrants Only)

Cancellation/Refund Policy: A 75 % refund will be made for cancellations received before August 1, 2010. A 50 % refund will be made for any cancellation between August 1 and August 30. No refunds will be made after August 30, 2010. Substitutions may be made at any time.

* **Conference room rate: \$129 single/double.** For reservations, call (757) 229-4020. View the hotel at <http://www.williamsburghospouse.com/>

** **Conference registration includes** a one-year membership in CREATE, conference reception, two breakfasts, one lunch, & conference materials.

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National Evaluation Institute
October 2011

Hosted by:

The University of Mississippi
Oxford, Mississippi, on the campus of Ole Miss

Additional information forthcoming



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