

# The Looking Glass

A Newsletter of the Educational Psychology Society  
The University of Northern Colorado  
Fall, 2005

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## **Officers Elected for 2005**

As provided for in the Constitution of the Educational Psychology Society, new officers were installed in an October meeting. Chris Hill has taken the helm as President, and Laura Lara will fill the position of Vice-President. Christy Adams will serve as Secretary/Treasurer, Lori Reinsvold will operate the website (<http://www.unco.edu/edpsychsociety/>), and Robert Johnson returns as Newsletter Editor.

With thanks to outgoing President Christie Paraglia for her last two years of service, Hill and the other officers have been developing ideas for the Society's school year fund allocations, citing last year's "field trips" to see Howard Gardner and Robert Sternberg as examples of money well spent.

In a late October meeting, the officers heard and discussed

ideas about opportunities to engage in collaborative efforts between our group and the University Schools, courtesy of groundwork in this endeavor by presenters Steven Pulos and Wally Jones. Said collaboration was judged to provide several benefits:

- A way to interact with students
- A learning opportunity for both the University School system and the Ed Psych Society/ College of Educational and Behavioral Sciences
- A school setting in which to conduct research in collaboration with teachers
- An avenue for the development of a lecture series in which UNC faculty and graduate students can present relevant research in on-going efforts to refine teaching practices
- Opportunities for presenters to communicate with diverse audiences

Topics for such a series of presentations or collaborations remain under discussion. Officers welcome your suggestions.

## New Faculty Profile



Above, Dr. Burleson stands in front of a print in her office offering a Chinese version of “*Carpe diem.*”

### **Understanding Cultural and Social Elements of Psychology**

Even as an undergrad at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, **Dr. Kathryn Burleson** began to nurture her long time interest in psychology. She has worked right through her degree programs, next attending Humbolt State in Northern California to complete her Masters Degree studying “Research in Teaching.”

This was followed by a stint at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where she completed her PhD from UCSC in a research collaboration involving Denver University and the Denver School of the Arts. She studied change in self- concept for students who went from public K-12 schools to specialized GT schools.

As a social-cultural psychologist, Dr. Burleson was interested in her subjects’ perceptions of the differences between the two school experiences, particularly in how students related to what she calls “The Big Fish, Little Pond Theory.” What happened to their self-perceptions as students labeled “exceptional” in the public school setting (Big Fish = high stress and expectations), when they went from that situation to one where there was a good deal more homogeneity of skills, talents, drive/effort?

Traditionally, students in this situation experience a decline in academic self-concept (as might be expected). But Dr. Burleson’s research indicated that although students’ self-concept did indeed decline as a result of new comparative social standing, there were also valid enhancements to students’ inspiration and desires to achieve and produce.

She continues her interests in socio-cultural psychology, as exemplified by the course she plans to teach next semester, “Diversity in Child Development.” Students, take note. This is a course which could help explain a lot for teachers-to-be and for burgeoning psychologists.

Additionally, she recommends her current reading, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down: A Hmong Child, Her American Doctors, and the Collision of Two Cultures* by Anne Fadiman. This story recounts the cultural divide from a Hmong woman’s point of view as she struggles with the new realities of living in Los Angeles with her newborn, who is afflicted with cerebral palsy.

As to being new on the faculty, Dr. Burleson expressed appreciation for the warm welcome and collegial spirit demonstrated by everyone here at UNC. Ensclosed on the “Lower Level,” she is looking forward to learning and growing with all the CEBS community.

## Research, Publications and Kudos

The following is but a small sample of what some of our colleagues have been up to lately. Readers and any other interested parties are encouraged to share similar news in our next issue by passing along such information to me as editor, at [robertbjohnson@go.com](mailto:robertbjohnson@go.com).

Congratulations go to Dr. **Doug Woody** who has been selected as the recipient of the 2005 Early Career Award from the Society of the History of Psychology.

Drs. **Karlin** and **Allen** recently did funded work with middle schoolers on metacognitive strategies in the math domain.

Random updates about folks from our Educational Psychology program:

- Please read the closing article about Dr. **Gypsy Denzine**.
- Note also that **Vanessa Ewing** has successfully completed her dissertation defense
- Also please note **Jeff Alison's** participation in several of the published articles listed below.

Drs. **Steven Pulos** and **Randy Lennon** continue to publish prolifically, as shown below.

- Alison, J., Lennon, R. & Pulos, S. (in press) Investigating the Compass of Shame: The Development of CoSS. Social Behavior and Personality

- Alison, J., Pulos, S & Lennon, R. (in press) Shame-ocued Coping: An Empirical Study of the Compass of Shame. Social Behavior and Personality
- Ritter, L., Pulos, S. & Lennon, R. (in press) Pediaticr Condition Falsification in Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. *North American Journal of Psychology*
- Campbell, J., Pulos, S., Hogan, M. & Murray, F. (2005) Reliability Generalization study of the Psychopathy Checklist Applied in Youthful Samples. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 65: 639-656.
- Pulos, S. & Denzine, G. (2005) Individual differences in planning behavior and working memory. Individual Differences Research. 3, 99-104
- Pulos, S., Alison, J. & Lennon, R. (2004) The hierarchical structure of The Interpersonal Reactivity Index. Social Behavior and Personality, 32, 4

*Nice work, folks!*



## **Upcoming Events**

### **2006 AERA Annual Meeting**

#### **“Education Research in the Public Interest”**

San Francisco, California

Friday, April 7- Tuesday, April 11

This year’s theme explores the current social and political pressure on education research that suggests that research must meet the demands of evidence-based and scientifically based inquiry and calls for education researchers to rise to an even higher professional standard –the standard of producing research in the public interest.

<http://www.aera.net>

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### **American Psychological Association**

New Orleans

August 10-13

<http://apa.org.convention06>

### **American Psychological Society**

New York

May 25-28

[www.psychologicalscience.org/convention](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention)

### **Rocky Mountain Psychological Association**

Park City, Utah

April 20-22

[www.rockymountainpsych.org](http://www.rockymountainpsych.org)

### **Southwestern Psychological Association**

Austin, Texas

April 13-15

[www.swpsych.org](http://www.swpsych.org)

### **Western Psychological Association**

Palm Springs, California

April 27-30

[www.westernpsych.org](http://www.westernpsych.org)

### **Midwestern Psychological Association**

Chicago

May 4-6

[www.midwesternpsych.org](http://www.midwesternpsych.org)

## New Student Profile



Christy Adams returns to UNC as a Doctoral student.

### **Not in Kansas Anymore**

**Christy Adams** has taken a circuitous route to get here, or more accurately, “*back* here” but her return to UNC is a purposeful one. After spending her youth in various parts of the country, Christy ended her high school days in Colorado, and soon began a continuing relationship with UNC. Thus, while technically not a “new” face around UNC, Christy brings with her the fresh ideas and enthusiasm of a newcomer.

Even as a youngster, she thought of pursuing a career in some kind of psychology, following in the footsteps of her mother, a Speech Therapist/ Rehab Counselor. This is a goal Christy is realizing in her continuing work here as an Ed Psych doctoral student.

After completing her undergraduate degree and Masters in Neuropsychology at UNC, Christy went to study at the University of Kansas, where she participated as a researcher in *fMRI* studies and served as a project director for the Center for

Research on Learning, where her main work centered on computer- adapted testing, especially as applied to reading comprehension and learning disabilities. This work is described in the following article in this newsletter.

In fact, because Christy has turned in several articles for this publication, she must be considered a featured writer for this issue.

Christy’s work with *fMRI* tests at KU involved taking care of some of the technical aspects of research involving and comparing subjects’ Expectancy and Meaningfulness responses in “on-line” observations of brain activity.

Having taught Cognitive Psychology and General Psychology at KU and now teaching Social Psychology here at UNC, her current reading of interest is in current events, and how the stories of the world around us support the theories and principles she is learning about and teaching in her class.

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*The Looking Glass* is published in the Fall and Spring by the Educational Psychology Society.

Contributions of articles, photos, graphics, suggestions, and corrections are welcome. Please contact Robert Johnson at [robertbjohnson@go.com](mailto:robertbjohnson@go.com).

Many thanks this term go to contributors Christy Adams, Mark Alcorn, Kathy Cochran and Steven Pulos.

Any errors are mine alone; insults, aspersions, and bric-a-brac may be hurled at me during my usual office hours in McKee, 411:

Most Tuesdays: 1:00-1:40

Most Thursdays: 3:30-4:00

Thank you for reading.

## Reading Comprehension Studies in Kansas University Research

By Christy Adams

In 2004, I had the opportunity to work as Project Manager for developing a computer adaptive reading comprehension test at the Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas. Lead investigator Dr. Daryl Mellard formed a team of reading and assessment specialists including Drs. John Poggio, Diane Nielson, Arlene Barry, Don Deschler, and Mike Hock.

The goal of the project was to develop a formative assessment tool which could be used with elementary and middle school children to provide an individual profile of each student's reading comprehension strengths and weakness. The major strength of this tool would be the relative ease, speed, efficiency, and accuracy of Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT). In just ten or fifteen minutes, with far fewer questions required than in other, longer, much more time-consuming paper and pencil reading assessments, teachers could glean enough information to determine very precisely what kind of assistance a given student might require. Using Item Response Theory parameters of *difficulty*, *discrimination*, and *probability of guessing*, the program would determine each new question ("on-line," so to say) as a result of the child's response to the previous item.

Next, we had to tackle issues such as a framework for the assessment, the types of reading comprehension to be assessed, and the types of passages and items to be used. We decided to use the NAEP 2009 framework, which is currently being developed. There are many comprehension processes we

could measure, such as internal representation, metacomprehension/metacognition, motivation, interest, use of strategies, prior knowledge, vocabulary, fluency, etc. Of types of writing to be used, how much should be expository, or technical, or narrative, or persuasive? How would we determine appropriate readability levels? Multiple choice or Constructed Response? Individual items or clusters? What would be the most telling sequence of assessment items? These issues dominated our discussions and studies for months.

We decided to use some vocabulary items first, in order to take advantage of the high correlation of vocabulary and comprehension. Then we developed a cloze procedure specifically designed to take advantage of the computer's ability to work so quickly. This presumes a hierarchy of comprehension processes associated with different difficulty levels. We also decided to use as many single-item questions as possible, and to use authentic, rather than made-for-the-test passages.

Currently, the grant is in the pilot-test stage. After the data have been collected and analyzed, researchers will make any indicated adjustments to the instrument, assuming it remains feasible, and a larger test will be conducted. If validity holds, instructor manuals would include suggestions and recommendations for instruction which take into account the specific strengths and weakness emerging from the profile.

## Five Great Things I Learned...

### From Five Great Mentors and Five Things I Learned the Hard Way

A Talk by Gypsy Denzine, as Reported by Christy Adams

Dr. Gypsy Denzine, a UNC alumnus in Educational Psychology and current associate dean of the College of Education at Northern Arizona University, recently addressed an EdPsych Seminar in College Teaching. She chose to pass along several pieces of advice, learned both from mentors and experience, great teachers, all. What did the professors have to say about succeeding as college teachers?

- **Dr. Daniel Kane** took some pressure off when he assured Gypsy that, “It’s okay not to finish your ‘To Do’ list.”
- **Dr. John Cooney** affirmed her efforts by say, “Learning and Teaching are hard work, and it takes a long time to go from novice to expert.”
- **Dr. William Marten, Rehab Counseling**, reminded her that sometimes a foray into a new area can cause us to neglect our primary duties. “I think you want to do it; I think you can do it; but you shouldn’t do it.”
- **Dr. Steven Pulos** says, “You haven’t started till you’ve started writing. There is an outlet for everything if you use feedback from rejections to improve your work. Then, keep trying.”
- **Gypsy’s father** was a long time professor himself, and of course had plenty of advice, including this about being on a faculty:

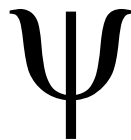
“For the first two years, just sit and listen. Absorb as much as you can from and about your colleagues. Don’t form allegiances, and don’t burn bridges.”

As to what she has learned “the hard way” through her own experiences as a college teacher, Dr. Denzine offered the following nuggets:

- **Culture Matters** Understanding as much as one can about the cultural standards of one’s service area community is invaluable in gaining trust and appropriately refining academic expectations and activities. Until she learned about the service area community’s culture –in her case, it was American Indian—she was at a loss for how some students and their families negatively viewed what she considered an innocuous assignment.
- **Serve on a Grade Appeal Committee** This will help you know what to expect if one of your students wants to challenge a grade.
- **Freshmen really are goofy** Expect it.
- **Be prepared to teach each day of class** It’s nearly impossible to wing it.
- **There’s no better gig in life than to be a tenured professor**

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UNC Educational Psychology Society



***Inside...***

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