

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION BUREAU



Fall Semester Newsletter

SPOTLIGHT STAFF MEMBER

The REB Says Goodbye to Retiring Lead Evaluator

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Mark Smilaycoff



Mark retired this summer after working in the REB as an evaluator since 2011. His major evaluation projects over the past four years have included the Case Western Reserve University CLIPS Polymer Envoys Program, the Akron Public Schools Literacy Pyramid and STEM Expansion projects, and two EHHS projects in collaboration with area school districts: Minding the Gap and KEEP Academy.

Mark states that he has enjoyed his time at Kent State and the work—especially those projects

involving the public school districts. He's also enjoyed working with the REB staff and the faculty and staff within EHHS. Mostly, he's enjoyed working with the graduate assistants within the REB. "I guess that I feel most comfortable when I'm teaching," he shared.

In 1974, Mark's career in education began as a high school drafting teacher and, eventually, a social studies teacher in the Canton City Schools. His training and experience in educational research, evaluation, and measurement began as a graduate student at Kent State University in 1976.

After earning an M.A. in 1980, Mark came to Kent State's Bureau of Research Training and Services for the first time in 1982, receiving his Ph.D. in Evaluation and Measurement in 1989.

Mark taught graduate courses in

research methodology, statistics, and tests and measurement at Cleveland State University, Kent State University, and Malone College. He spent his final six years in the Canton City Schools as a testing coordinator and data analyst. Mark retired from the Canton City Schools in 2005 after 30 years of service, but continued to work part time as a data analyst in the Canton City Schools until 2011.

Now that he is re-retiring, first on his agenda are several remodeling projects at his home. He hopes that he will then "begin to act like someone who is actually retired: travel some and play more golf." Mark would like to see Machu Picchu and loves to travel through New England and the Atlantic Provinces of Canada . . . "Or maybe I will buy a condo on Meyers Lake in Canton. Who knows what retirement will bring?"

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REB PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

National Alliance for Grieving Children Symposium

Research Team: Pamela Freeman, Deepa Shanadi & Leanna Lostoski

Bureau staff Pamela Freeman and Deepa Shanadi, along with faculty team members Rhonda Richardson and Sue Maxymiv, presented at the 20th Annual National Alliance for Grieving Children Symposium held in Portland, Oregon from June 17-20, 2015.

Their presentation, "Bereavement Camps as Positive Developmental Settings: Youth Camper Perceptions and Adult Alumni Reflections," high-

lighted the latest findings from the longitudinal evaluation of bereavement camps examining the impact of weekend bereavement camps on children and their families.



(L to R) Sue Maxymiv, Deepa Shanadi, Rhonda Richardson, Pamela Freeman

SPOTLIGHT STAFF MEMBER

REB Evaluator Receives His Ph.D.

Eddie Bolden



Eddie is pictured here at his August graduation with wife Heather and 7-month-old daughter Kali

Eddie just completed his Ph.D. in Evaluation and Measurement, with his dissertation focusing on instrument development. He wrote an employee self-report instrument assessing service behaviors within the healthcare setting.

After starting coursework in Summer 2010 and taking classes

part time, Eddie finished comprehensive exams in August 2013 and immediately began his dissertation that semester. The entire process took a year and 9 months and primarily consisted of proposal development and data collection. He found it to be a very “challenging and educational process.”

Eddie has been at the REB since October 2010. Since then, he has worked on several external evaluation projects as well as worked with EHHS faculty and graduate students.

Consulting with faculty and graduate students, each of who bring up very different projects with very different questions, is Eddie’s favorite part about his job. “It’s always fun to see who is do-

ing what within the college and help make connections where I am able,” he commented.

Eddie has also enjoyed teaching classes. He has taught Classical Test Theory, Item Response Theory, and Stat I. This summer he taught Stat I online and developed an online version of Classical Test Theory, which he will roll out this fall. “The teaching experience has by far been the most interesting for me, as it was something I never knew how much I would like until I got the opportunity,” Eddie shared.

Eddie likes to spend his spare time with his wife Heather and daughter Kali in addition to coaching lacrosse and hockey.

REB PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG)

Bureau Research Team: Debbie Shama-Davis, Eddie Bolden, Rachel Piskos, Leanna Lostoski & Danielle Rupprecht

The REB, working with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), completed a statewide evaluation of the Closing the Achievement Gap (CTAG) program this past summer. Eight districts were included in the evaluation: Akron, Ashtabula, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, East Cleveland, and Springfield. The CTAG program targets students based on certain “at-risk” factors identifying students who are not progressing with their grade level peers.



Results of the evaluation indicated that students who participated in CTAG programming exhibited better outcomes than students who were identified as having the same risk factors but did not participate in any CTAG pro-

grams. CTAG participants, compared with non-participants, recorded fewer absences and days spent in out-of-school suspension, more growth in OAA reading and math scores, were more likely to obtain passing scores on the OAA, and were more likely to meet their OGT testing requirements. Most notably, high school level CTAG participants outperformed their counterparts in the number of credits earned, promotion, and graduation rates.

IN THE DATA LAB

Introducing the New Data Lab Coordinator

The REB is excited to welcome a new Data Lab Coordinator, Danielle Rupprecht. Danielle is a graduate assistant in the REB and worked in the Data Lab during her undergraduate career. She is

beginning her third semester in the Speech Pathology and Audiology master’s program this fall.

Please feel free to contact Danielle at drupprec@kent.edu



with any questions about the services offered by the Data Lab or to arrange for transcription and data entry.

INTERESTED IN RESEARCH SERVICES?

What We Do:

Consultation Services

- Research design
- Statistical design

Data Analysis

- SPSS database development
- Quantitative data analysis in SPSS
- Explanation of SPSS output

Survey Development

- Consultation in the use of online surveys, including Qualtrics and SurveyMonkey
- Survey layout and design (online and paper and pencil)



Data Lab Services

- Transcriptions from mp3 files, standard-size cassette tapes, or Accellion
- Data entry of hard-copy survey responses into SPSS, both quantitative and qualitative data

What We Do Not Do:

We have recently received a large number of inquiries about granting access to Listservs. This is not something that REB has access to or regulates. Please direct your questions to Information Services.

EHHS FACULTY AND GRAD STUDENTS

For Unfunded Research:

Services for Faculty

EHHS faculty receive an unlimited number of hours of college-supported REB consultation services on unfunded projects and an unlimited number of college-supported hours of Bureau Data Lab services for unfunded projects.

Services for Graduate Students

Doctoral students at dissertation level and Master's students at thesis level receive 40 hours of college-supported consultation services as well as 40 hours of Data Lab services (not to be interchanged with the 40 -hour allotment for consultation services).

For Funded Research:

We provide the same services at cost.

NEED HELP WITH GRANT EVALUATION?

- The Bureau provides comprehensive multi-methods program evaluation services based on your project needs and specifications.
- The Bureau's highly skilled staff has extensive experience delivering high quality, evidence-driven evaluations of international, national, state, and local development programs in the areas of health, human services, and education.
- We serve as an active member of your grant writing team by providing expertise for the evaluation component of your project for your grant application.
- We are always interested in partnering with individuals or organizations to provide evaluation and assessment services.
- Please contact us to discuss your specific research and evaluation needs. We look forward to hearing from you.



OVERVIEW

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The Research and Evaluation Bureau offers comprehensive research, evaluation, and assessment services to schools, medical and health related institutions, human services agencies, community organizations, businesses, faculty, graduate students, and other individuals. The mission of the Bureau is to provide research and evaluation services that assist in enhancing education, health, and human service outcomes worldwide.

In addition, we work with you to develop and write a project evaluation and/or research plan, with the agreement that if the project is funded, the Bureau will be the project's evaluation team. In most cases, the Bureau is considered by funding agencies (including NSF) to be *external evaluators*.

Meet the Staff

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