Professor Gates and a number of MESA students attended the American Evaluation Association’s annual conference held in Minneapolis, MN. They were involved in the following presentations:

- **Debunking a Misconception: How Systems Thinking Can Help Us Simplify Complexity:** Emily Gates

- **Value Arguments: Using Validity Theory to Inform How Evaluators Make Value Claims in Social Interventions:** Charlotte Aldrich

- **What Can Valuing Methods Tell Us About Valuing Theory? A Review of Two Story-based Valuing Methods Used in Evaluation:** Emily Gates, Eric Williamson

- **Using Success Case Method (SCM) to Evaluate Educational Technology in Massachusetts Urban Schools & Future Paths for SCM:** Haylea Hubacz, Olivia Szendey, Emily Gates

- **Applying Equity, Social Justice, & Culturally Responsive Lenses to Evaluate a Middle School Science Curriculum: Reflections from Evaluators-in-Training:** Carly Oddleifson, Chris DeVido, Yaeun Shin

In addition, we congratulate Clara Shim who was elected program co-chair of the Systems in Evaluation topical interest group.

At the conference we enjoyed learning from the sessions we attended and experts in the field, networking with other attendees, attending topical interest group meetings, engaging with audience members during our presentations, and supporting each other’s presentations.

Many of us took advantage of the opportunity to explore Minneapolis- we had fun wandering the skyways (which connects ~80 city blocks), attending the Greater Boston Evaluators Network (GBEN) meetup at a local brewery, and checking out the Mall of America. We are already looking forward to next year’s conference in Portland, Oregon!
Updates from Students, Alumni, and Faculty

Jing Jiang received the George Madaus Graduate Student Research Award.

The George Madaus Graduate Student Research Award honors a founder of the Measurement, Evaluation, Statistics, and Assessment department (formerly the Educational Research, Measurement, and Evaluation department) and a major figure in educational assessment and evaluation. It is awarded annually to a current graduate student in recognition of outstanding research that contributes to one or more of the following topical areas: advancing the technical quality of educational and psychological assessments; enhancing the methodology and practice of program evaluation; or contributing to a deeper understanding of consequential validity, particularly through reducing the negative impact of test use on students, teachers and society-at-large.

Sebastian Moncaleano received the Donald J. White Teaching Excellence Award. This program was established to underscore and reinforce the importance of the pursuit of teaching excellence of graduate Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants.

Maria Baez Cruz and her husband Diego welcomed their son Alfonso on Friday, September 13. He’s now a healthy and happy 2 month-old with a few publications under his belt (written in collaboration from the womb).

Avery Newton was accepted to the 2019-2020 cohort of the Massachusetts Education Policy Fellowship Program, run through the Rennie Center and the Institute for Educational Leadership in DC. This is in addition to her full time work at ASA and she’s thrilled to have the opportunity to expand her skills in educational leadership and learn new strategies for integrating her research background with policy and practice.

Josh Littenberg-Tobias

I’m working as a Research Scientist at the MIT Teaching Systems Lab studying how technology can improve teacher professional learning. My current work focuses on teachers’ experience in large-scale online learning environments and developing practice-based teaching simulations. I’m living in East Somerville with my wife Liza and two daughters - Stella (4) and Ruby (14 months). In my (very rare) free time I like to run, bake bread, and read up on basketball and politics.

Yuting Sui is currently working in Shanghai, China as a psychometrician at Laix Inc (Liulishuo), an education technology company that develops mobile English learning applications. She analyzes massive student behavioral data. Additionally, she develops and modifies assessments, along with corresponding validation research.

Roland Stark

This year, I began working as an analyst at a Concord, MA non-profit called the DeltaQuest Foundation. We do innovative survey research to uncover ways in which patients and caregivers can better manage major illnesses. Many of our studies translate into articles published in journals such as on quality of life, psychology, hematology, orthopaedics, and neuroscience.

Rachel Whilby joined Fusion Academy, located in Atlanta, GA, this past April. As the school’s Assistant Director, she opened up the Buckhead campus this past summer. Fusion has more than 50 campus’ nation-wide and is a revolutionary one-to-one academic program for students in grades 6-12.

Avery Newton

Sebastian Moncaleano

Maria Baez Cruz

Josh Littenberg-Tobias

Yuting Sui

Roland Stark

Jing Jiang

Kyle DeMeeo Cook

Kyle DeMeeo Cook just started a new job as an Assistant Professor at St. John’s University in New York. She’s teaching research methods classes in the School of Education.
Jim Brosnan

“I have recently had a poetry and photography book published by Moon Pie Press in Maine. Autograph copies can be purchased through my website drjimbrosnan.com”


Clair Johnson

I have accepted a position at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School within the McNulty Leadership Program. As an Associate Director, I’m responsible for creating, implementing, and maintaining an organization-wide strategy and approach for data collection, analysis, and reporting for the Program, the Lipman Family Prize, and the Center for Leadership and Change Management. I will lead and execute program evaluation functions; serve as the in-house resource for technology and software; develop and establish standard operating processes and procedures; and otherwise support efforts to meet strategic initiatives.

Katie Chuchul (née Trefcer) and her husband are happy to announce the birth of their son Brian Edward. He was born on April 9, 2019 and is a happy, sweet boy.

Ella Anghel and Olivia Szendey traveled to Northeastern Educational Research Association in Trumbull CT. They presented the paper they co-authored with Dr. Ludlow titled The BC-LAMP Portfolio Project: Measuring Living a Life of Meaning and Purpose.

Yaeer Shin

I am interning at the Education Development Center in Waltham through the American Evaluation Association Graduation Education Diversity Internship (GEDI) program. I have been working on two projects - one is a school improvement project to evaluate an education strategy implemented in a Midwest city. The other is the Coordination Hub of INCLUDES Network funded by the National Science Foundation to improve diversity & equity in STEM academic & career pathways. You can contact me at shinyj@bc.edu if you are interested in the GEDI program and EDC.

Jorge Mahecha’s Consultancy firm, Corporación Educación y Desarrollo, CED (Education and Development Corporation, a small non-for profit based in Colombia) is doing market research for an investment fund based in New York and Atlanta. The research aims at characterizing the financial needs and development plans for private schools serving families of middle to low income in six Latin American cities: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, México City and the México Valley Area, Lima and Bogotá. Hundreds of schools owners have been interviewed for this project. The CED is looking to expand operations in other countries in Latin America and the US. Jorge continues serving as a board member of Enseña por Colombia (Teach for Colombia), part of the Teach for All network, a group including programs similar to Teach for America all around the world. Anyone interested in starting consultancy projects in the areas of psychometrics, survey design, program evaluation, teacher training and learning assessment here or elsewhere, please contact Jorge at jorgemahecha@ced.org.co.

Ismael Carreras

My older daughter Caroline just recently earned her bachelor’s degree from Bates, having graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa with a degree in psychology, but she is very interested in pursuing a career in education. My younger daughter Julia is in her junior year of high school and competed in the world championships this summer in Canada as a member of the Puerto Rico National U19 Women’s Lacrosse Team.

Salman Alawadi and his wife are happy to announce the birth of their son Zaid!
## Publications

### Maria Jose Ramirez

My most recent publication is on educational exclusion, learning, and drop outs in Central America. This publication builds on data from the regional assessment TERCE and PISA. This is a policy-oriented publication that I wrote for the *InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB)* and that was shared with Ministers of Education from all 10 countries in the region. Here is the [link](#) (in Spanish).

I also have these two previous publications that I wrote for *UNESCO-UIS (UNESCO Institute of Statistics)*. Their purpose is to support practitioners (staff from ministers of education, donors, international agencies) in developing countries to put in place national learning assessments:

- **Quick Guide No. 2: Making the Case for a Learning Assessment**; also in [Spanish](#) and [French](#).
- **Quick Guide No. 3: Implementing a National Learning Assessment**; also in [Spanish](#) and [French](#).

I also published this blog on the use of social media to disseminate results from assessments. [Link](#).

### Courtney Castle and Katrina Borowiec

Have an article accepted by the Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation (PARE) journal for publication: *Using Rater Cognition to Improve Generalizability of an Assessment of Scientific Argumentation*. They would like to extend their gratitude to Dr. Russell for his support and mentorship on this project.

### Mike Russell and Sebastian Moncaleano

Published a new article early this fall titled *Examining the Use and Construct Fidelity of Technology-Enhanced Items Employed by K-12 Testing Programs*. You find the link to the paper below: [https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10627197.2019.1670055](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10627197.2019.1670055)

### Jong-Min Kim, Namgil Lee, and Xingyao Xiao

Published on March 14, 2019 *Directional dependence between major cities in China based on copula regression on air pollution measurements*, [https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213148](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0213148)


Katherine Reynolds:
This past summer I returned to Dublin, Ireland for a second summer with the Centre for Assessment Research, Policy, and Practice in Education. I continued to build on work I began last year (including a validity study of the ETS HEIghten Critical Thinking Test for use in an Irish), and also began a new project reviewing best practices in technology-enhanced formative assessment for STEM fields.

Haylea Hubacz:
This summer continued working with Educational Technology Services as Graduate Academic Technologist at Harvard Business School. In addition, I continued my work on the Massachusetts Personalized Learning EdTech Consortium with Dr. Gates.

In June I was able to travel to Atlanta, Georgia with Clara Shim and Francisca Fils-Aime to attend the American Evaluation Association’s Summer Evaluation Institute. Here we took part in several courses including Social Network Analysis for Program Evaluation, Intro to Communities of Practice, and Using Theory to Improve Evaluation Practice. During our free time, we enjoyed the food and shops in many of the markets Atlanta had to offer. When I wasn’t working, I enjoyed spending time with my family and vacationing in York, Maine.

Endaisia Love:
Over the summer, I interned at the American Institute for Research’s Austin branch as a Research Associate in Research and Evaluation and Technical Assistance. During my time, I contributed to a number of projects, most notably, an evaluation of Career and Technical Education programs implemented by the U.S. DOE in five states and the implementation of Teacher Education and Training programs through the Grow Your Own Grant in partnership with the Texas Education Agency. One of the highlights of my internship was attending a Data Visualization training hosted by Evergreen Data! Researchers from AIR and TEA brought in data they were struggling to visualize and we workedshopped them. I learned so much and received all three of her data viz books! I definitely enjoyed me time interning at AIR. It’s been a dream of mine to work for the organization in some capacity since I was in undergrad.

Olivia Szendey:
I interned at The Centre for Assessment Research Policy and Practice (CARPE) in Ireland. I worked on two major projects, a literature review and a review of emerging assessment trends. Specifically, the literature review sought to synthesize existing research addressing digital architectures for use in technology-enhanced formative assessment. This project was apart of a larger Erasmus grant focused on developing a digital tool for formative assessment in STEM to be deployed in European Partner Countries. Through my review of emerging assessment trends I identified two particularly interesting ones—personalization of assessment and automatic item generation. I produced small summaries of those two trends for CARPE’s funders, Prometric.

I had a wonderful time working at CARPE this summer, it provided me with an excellent opportunity to engage with researchers in the field and work on meaningful projects. In addition, I had a great time exploring Ireland on the weekends!

Xingyao Xiao:
This past summer, I continued work at Research Services with Rani Dalgin. In addition, I worked with Dr. Mike Barnett on the Smart GreenHouse Project. I was also able to spend some time in my home country, China, to visit my family and friends!

Larry Kaplan:
Last summer I was hired by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) as a Research Consultant. Among other things, CCE manages the data for the Massachusetts Consortium of Innovative Educational Assessment’s (MCIEA) project on School Quality Measures. My primary responsibilities were data cleaning and organizing. They asked me to continue on in informal basis to continue working of some small projects his fall. I was also hired by UMass Lowell as an educational consultant. During the summer I trained two UMass PhD students in the use of R in data cleaning. I used this experience to develop the R workshop series I offered in September. I was able to continue working on our Yurt in New Hampshire last summer. The off-grid solar panels are up and running, and the wood stove is nearly ready; not a moment too soon.

Carly Oddleifson:
Over the summer I worked as a Research Assistant for the Center for Responsive Schools (CRS). I wrote a literature review to help them revise and update their book “How to Bully Proof Your Classroom.”
The MESA Department is proud to welcome **Dr. Matthias von Davier** as our newest faculty member!

Dr. von Davier is a Distinguished Research Scientist at the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) in Philadelphia. Previously, he was a Senior Research Director in the Research & Development Division at Educational Testing Service (ETS). In addition, he was the co-director of the Center for Global Assessment at ETS, where he led psychometric research and operational analysis for assessments such as PISA, PIAAC, TIMSS and PIRLS. His current work focuses on extending, implementing and applying multidimensional IRT, IRTree, and latent response models. Additionally, he also builds speed and accuracy models to process data research using log-file and timing data using data from large scale tests.

Dr. von Davier will start his professorship in the MESA Department in summer 2020. While Boston College will share more information about him soon, you can view a few of his current publications [here](#).

In October, MESA students and faculty gathered for the annual fall potluck. This year, since it was hosted on Halloween, costumes were strongly encouraged! All attendees enjoyed copious amounts of delicious food and good conversation. Thank you to our co-social chairs Xingyao Xiao and Olivia Szendey.

Can you guess which talented MESA faculty member recently drew this sketch from their train trip to Chicago? :-)

![Sketch](image-url)
Update from the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center – November 2019

IEA International Research Conference, June 2019

TIMSS & PIRLS Executive Directors Drs. Ina V.S. Mullis and Michael O. Martin, along with MESA alum Dr. Bethany Fishbein, participated in a symposium at the IEA’s 8th International Research Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, in June 2019. The symposium, “Perspectives on PIRLS and ePIRLS 2016,” included presentations by PIRLS 2016 National Research Coordinators from Denmark, France, and Sweden.

IEA General Assembly Meeting, October 2019

TIMSS & PIRLS Executive Directors Ina V.S. Mullis and Michael O. Martin participated in the IEA General Assembly meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in October 2019. They presented on the successful completion of the TIMSS 2019 data collection, development of the PIRLS 2021 digital and paper-based assessment, and plans for the TIMSS 2023 all-digital assessment. As reported to the General Assembly by Drs. Mullis and Martin, work is progressing well on TIMSS and PIRLS. Staff at the TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center are currently analyzing and scaling the data in preparation for reporting the results next year and the PIRLS 2021 field test materials have been finalized for the field test in spring 2020.