President’s Message from Valerie Schwiebert

As I write my last president’s message, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for making this year such a great experience for me. I was very blessed to have a wonderful executive council and great participation from many of you. It has been my honor to serve AACE this year and I am proud of the initiatives we have begun during this year. We have worked to increase member recruitment, involvement, and retention. We have also focused a great deal of effort on supporting student involvement in our association. At ACA in Detroit, we had a graduate student reception and we had a special session led by Dr. Watson on how to become involved in our organization. We also donated a free one year membership in AACE and a free AACE conference registration to the first timer’s meeting at ACA and in Dr. Watson’s session. Finally, we have worked to provide more to members such as reactivating Newsbytes, continuing Newsnotes, establishing our new website (theaaceonline.com), and planning our national conference for fall, 2007 in Atlanta! Dr. Gibson has done a tremendous job in the early planning of our Atlanta conference and I am certain she will continue her outstanding contributions to AACE throughout her presidency. I believe AACE was well represented at ACA this year and I hope to see all of you in Hawaii next year!

Thank you for a terrific year as president!

Peace, Valerie
New Faces Join the AACE Executive Council

During the recent AACE elections members had the opportunity to elect the future leaders of our division. Joining the Executive Council as President-Elect is Rick Balkin. Rick is a counselor educator at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Another new face on the Executive Council this year will be Shawn Spurgeon from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. For Shawn, the news of his election was met with much enthusiasm. “I was pleasantly surprised by my election and consider it to be an honor to work with AACE. I already knew many of the people who served on previous executive committees and I was drawn to their professionalism and positive attitude. I am excited about the prospect of working with AACE as the treasurer” Spurgeon said.

In addition to our new members, the Executive Council is pleased to welcome some familiar faces to their new positions in the division. Danica Hays, former Member-at-Large for Publications, will now be serving as the Member-at-Large for Membership. Replacing Danica will be Debbie Newsome. Debbie, the former treasurer, will be taking over the Member-at-Large for Publications position in the coming year. Both Danica and Debbie have been strong advocates for the division and have worked tirelessly for its members. As a division we are fortunate to have their leadership with us for a few more years.

These individuals will assume their new roles on July 1 of this year. Congratulations to them all!

2007 AACE National Assessment Conference

Colleagues…It's time to start making your plans to attend the 2007 Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education National Assessment Conference in Atlanta, Georgia!

This year’s conference will be held November 9-10 on the campus of Georgia State University. The annual conference has become a premier event for our division and this year is no exception. Several high quality education sessions will be offered as well as ample social activities for good friends to catch up on old times.

Early bird registrations rates are still available! Register by September 15 and pay only $149.00 ($69.00 for student members, $99.00 for non-member students). This cost covers all program events, two continental breakfasts, all break refreshments, and receptions…a true bargain for such a premier event! For your convenience, a conference registration form is included in this newsletter.

In addition, if you would like to present at this year’s conference, proposals are still being accepted. A copy of the proposal form is also included.
AACE Finds a New Home on the Web

In March, AACE released its new home on the Internet. The site, www.theaaceonline.com, contains a wealth of information for both current and prospective members. Among the many features of the new site are:

- Information on how to become a member (electronic and print applications available)
- Downloadable copies of several division publications and monographs
- Links to various sites and vendors of interest to the AACE membership
- Information on how to participate in the division awards and scholarship programs
- Updated conference registration information

A Motown Review: AACE at ACA

In March, the AACE executive and new executive councils met during the ACA National Convention. During the two-day meetings, executive council members reviewed the current year activities and planned for the upcoming 2007-2008 year for AACE members. One of the highlights will be the 2007 National Assessment conference to be held at Georgia State University during November 9-10, 2007.

During the ACA convention, AACE held two very successful ancillary events. First, a graduate student reception was held in the AACE suite. Several graduate students from across the country attended and expressed their interest in becoming involved in AACE. Second, the annual awards breakfast was highly attended in which Dr. Jane Myers presented her research on wellness assessment.

As the new executive council prepares for the new year, there is excitement about the opportunity to attend and present at the 2008 ACA convention to be held in Honolulu, Hawaii next March. All members are encouraged to attend and also be active in the AACE activities to be held at the convention.

If you are interested in being active in AACE and do not know where to start, please contact Donna Gibson (AACE president-elect, gibsond@gwm.sc.edu) for her to help you find your place in AACE.

Find Your Place In AACE!
2007 AACE Award Winners

At the ACA conference in Detroit several members of AACE were recognized for their outstanding professional accomplishments. At the National level, AACE was well represented. Six members nominated by AACE were selected as recipients of various ACA National Awards. These recipients were: Sam Gladding (Gilbert and Kathleen Wrenn Award), Patricia Elmore (ACA Extended Research Award), Catharina Chang (Counselor Educator Advocacy Award), Susan Eaves (Glen Hubele Graduate Student Award). In addition, Sam Gladding, Dave Jepsen, and Skip Niles were selected as ACA Fellows.

At the Division level, Daniel Salter, Deanna Forney, and Nancy Evans were selected as recipients of the Patricia B. Elmore MECD Editor’s Research Award. This award is presented to the author or authors of an original manuscript published in the MECD journal during the preceding two years. “On behalf of my two colleagues, I want to thank AACE for this award. What an honor to be recognized in this way, and for an article of which I’m especially proud. It was an interesting challenge to write, and we greatly appreciated the support that we received from MECD and Patti Elmore” Salter said. Their article “Two Approaches to Examining the Stability of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Scores” appeared in the January 2005 issue of MECD.

Also recognized for her scholarship was Laura Welfare, a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Laura was chosen as the 2007 recipient of the Donald Hood Student Research Grant. “I am honored to receive the Donald Hood award and proud to be a part of this division. I believe that it is important for us to continue to encourage doctoral students to be knowledgeable about assessment use and development” Welfare said. When asked how she envisions her research advancing the counseling profession Welfare said she “hopes the Counselor Cognitions Questionnaire will become an important tool in the study of counselor cognitive development. By specifically measuring the complexity of the counselor's conceptualization of a client, the instrument measures counselor's cognitions in a way that is highly relevant to practice.” A $500.00 scholarship grant was presented to Laura to help fund her continued research efforts.

2006-07 AACE Committee Chairs

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Scenes from the 2007 ACA National Conference in Detroit

Rick Balkin, Valerie Schwiebert, and Donna Gibson

Jane Myers and Gary Walz take a moment to chat

Several members turn out for the awards breakfast

Old friends and new friends getting together

Catharina Chang keeps the Executive Council focused

The Council hard at work making AACE a success
Refer a Colleague to AACE

AACE is actively seeking to recruit new members interested in joining a dynamic group of professionals who share a common passion for measurement and evaluation. If you know any individuals who fit this description please consider asking them to join.

Membership in AACE has many benefits including:

- A subscription to *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, the division’s quarterly journal that publishes research as well as practical and innovative articles of relevance to assessment specialists. Regular features include “Methods Plainly Speaking” in which technical methods for the study of assessment instruments are explained, and reviews and evaluations of new or revised tests and other assessment instruments are featured.

- A subscription to the division newsletter *NewsNotes*. *NewsNotes* is published quarterly and provides state, regional, national, and international news and information, legislative updates, and special articles of interest to assessment specialists.

- Regular updates of important issues and upcoming events and opportunities through the division’s electronic news bulletin, *Newsbytes*. *Newsbytes* is sent to the email address on record for all AACE members.

- Discounts on Professional Liability Insurance. AACE, through its affiliation with the National Professional Group is able to extend to its members professional liability insurance coverage at very attractive rates.

- Opportunities to interact with leaders in assessment, measurement, and evaluation through state associations, national conferences, and committee activities.

- Opportunities to develop your leadership skills by becoming an AACE committee member or officer.

- Opportunities for your work to be recognized through the AACE Awards program.

Interested individuals can join in one of three ways:

1. Join online through the American Counseling Association ([www.counseling.org](http://www.counseling.org))
2. Complete and mail the print copy of the membership application found at [www.theaaceonline.com](http://www.theaaceonline.com)
3. Contact the current membership chair, Danica Hays at dhays@odu.edu
Test Reviews

Review: Marital Satisfaction Inventory - Revised
Laura Welfare, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

I. General Information

A. Title: Marital Satisfaction Inventory, Revised (MSI-R)
B. Author: Douglas K. Snyder
C. Publisher: Western Psychological Services, 12031 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles California, 90025-1251
D. Forms; groups to which applicable: One form, for use with married couples. Available in English and Spanish versions.
E. General type: Self-reported nature and extent of relationship distress.
F. Date of publication: 1997
G. Practical features: The MSI-R can be individually or group administered. Written forms or computer forms are available.
H. Cost: $104.00 per introductory test kit. The kit includes the manual and 20 AutoScore forms. Additional forms are available in packages of 20 for $48.00.
I. Time required to administer: This assessment can be administered and scored in approximately 25 minutes.

II. Purpose and Nature of the Instrument

A. Stated purpose: The MSI-R is a revised measure of marital conflict and discord (Snyder, 1997). It is a self-report measure that identifies positive and potentially problematic dimensions within the relationship. Each partner in the relationship takes the assessment. The interpretation of results is designed to inform the counseling process. It can be used as a tool to identify areas of relationship distress and relative strength.
B. Description of test, items and scores: The assessment is comprised of 150 true/false items. The items are grouped into subscales: Inconsistency, Conventionalization, Global Distress, Affective Communication, Problem-Solving Communication, Aggression, Time Together, Disagreement About Finances, Role Orientation, Family History of Distress, Dissatisfaction with Children, and Conflict over Child Rearing. The items are written on a sixth grade reading level.
C. Use in counseling: The MSI-R is primarily used to assess marital discord in couples seeking relationship counseling. It also may be used in family counseling or in counseling with a child or adolescent as the parental relationship impacts all family members.

III. Practical Evaluation:

A. Usefulness of the manual: The user manual is thorough and informative. The author reports details of the development and validation of the instrument as well as relevant psychometrics. The author also includes case studies with detailed score reports and interpretations. The administration booklet has written directions that can be read aloud by the administrator.

Continued on page 8
III. Practical Evaluation:

A. Usefulness of the manual: The user manual is thorough and informative. The author reports details of the development and validation of the instrument as well as relevant psychometrics. The author also includes case studies with detailed score reports and interpretations. The administration booklet has written directions that can be read aloud by the administrator.

IV. Technical Considerations

A. Normative Sample: Data from a sample of 1020 couples was collected during 1995 and 1996. Respondents ranged in age from 16 to 92 years. Seventy-five percent of the sample was between the ages of 20 and 49 years. Collection sites were geographically diverse. Eighty-seven percent of the men and 69% of the women reported that they are employed outside of the home. The job categories identified by respondents were as follows: 26.8% business manager or lower professional, 20.8% clerical, sales, or technical, 13.4% skilled manual, 12.1% executive or advanced professional, 10.8% administrator or small business owner, 9% unskilled, and 7.1% semi-skilled or machine operator. The most common response of number of children was 2. Approximately 76.3% of the respondents identified themselves as white, while 12.9% were black, 8.6% were Hispanic, 1.4% were Asian, and .8% other.

B. Reliability: The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for overall internal consistency was a .82. The individual subscale internal consistency coefficients are as follows: Conventionalization .83, Global Distress .93, Affective Communication .85, Problem-Solving Communication .89, Aggression .81, Time Together .80, Disagreement About Finances .79, Role Orientation .83, Family History of Distress .78, Dissatisfaction with Children .70, and Conflict over Child Rearing .78. This suggests high internal consistency for all of the subscales. The six week test-retest reliability was collected from 105 couples from the general population over a 6-week interval. The mean test-retest reliability coefficient was .79. This is an acceptable level of test-retest reliability. However, no information was given about the events or experiences that could have affected change on the couple’s marital satisfaction during the elapsed 6-week period. There is the possibility that taking the assessment or participating in the study affected the scores.

C. Validity: The validity of the MSI-R was established by correlating it with the well established previous version of the MSI (Snyder, 1979). The median correlation score was a 95.5, which indicates a strong correlation. The MSI has been studied using clinically diverse samples. Evidence of validity has been demonstrated in that the MSI differentiates between groups that would be expected to differ on levels of marital satisfaction. Westerman and Schonholz found that marital conflict is elevated in parents of behaviorally disturbed children and adolescents. There is some evidence of significant subscale differences between couples in counseling and couples not in counseling (Snyder, Wills, & Keiser, 1981). Another source of evidence for validity is in test-retest measures of couples in therapy. The MSI was given to 59 couples prior to and after completing counseling (Snyder & Willis, 1989). The post test indicates significant improvement in Global Distress, Affective Communication, Problem-Solving Communication, and Time Together.

V. Evaluation

A. Comments of reviewers and general evaluation: The MSI-R is a well established measure of marital satisfaction and discord. The test instructions are clear and the instrument is easy to complete. Because it is a self-report measure the accuracy of the results relies on honest disclosure from the respondent. There are two subscales included that are designed to identify respondents who answer inconsistently or with distortions. The results are valuable for assessment and treatment planning in couples counseling. Scores can be interpreted in a number of ways. Subscale scores can be compared to identify areas of relative strength and weakness. Scores can be compared within the couple to identify areas of marital discord that are important to each partner. Scores also can be converted to normed scores to evaluate the overall severity of the discord in comparison with other couples. The clinical implications of these scoring options are vast. Additionally, because the assessment does not prescribe a specific treatment modality, counselors will varying theoretical orientations can utilize the instrument.

Continued on page 9
The MSI-R can provide useful stimuli for discussion and goal setting in couples or family work.

A major weakness of the instrument is the lack of factor analysis data. The items were chosen by the author based on predetermined content areas. No factor analysis data is available for the items; therefore it is unclear whether the subscale structure is equivalent to the factor structure. The evidence of reliability and validity reported by the author suggests some psychometric stability of the instrument, but a factor analysis would further strengthen the MSI-R and may reduce the number of items needed to capture the relevant information. Fowers states that the MSI-R is the strongest measure of marital satisfaction available (1990). Others have touted the instrument multidimensional nature and broad application Boen, 1988). Despite psychometric limitations, the MSI-R can be a valuable tool for professionals working with couples in marital counseling.

REFERENCES


Call for Submissions

Graduate Students, looking for an opportunity to publish? The editor of NewsNotes invites you to consider submitting a manuscript to the “Student Perspectives” column. This column is a forum for graduate students to discuss issues pertinent to them and their careers and training. Possible ideas for manuscripts include: student opinions on current trends in testing and assessment, advice for finishing a dissertation, helpful hints and techniques for research design, and recommendations for testing and assessment instruments. If you might be interested you are encouraged to contact Joshua Watson, NewsNotes editor, at jwatson@meridian.msstate.edu. All submissions should be 500 words or less and adhere to the latest APA style guidelines. A panel of editorial assistants will review all submissions and forward a recommendation for publication. Submissions should be sent electronically as a Microsoft Word document to the email address referenced above.
Get Involved

If you are interested in getting more involved in AACE I would encourage you to consider joining a committee. A listing of committees can be found on page 4 of this issue. Contact the listed chairperson expressing your intent and they will be happy to help you get involved and begin working with a dynamic group of professionals committed to advancing the practices of testing and assessment in a variety of settings.

Newsnotes
Loyola College
Education Dept.
2034 Greenspring Dr.
Timonium, MD 21093