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Call for Papers: Early Childhood Research Quarterly Special Issue

Call for papers: Measuring Quality in Early Care and Education: Past, Present, and Future

Special Issue of ***Early Childhood Research Quarterly***
Guest Editors: Dr. Rachel A. Gordon and Dr. Dale Farran

Aims and scope of the Special Issue

Measures of the quality of early care and education settings have been widely adopted for accountability purposes, which has led to rethinking long-held understandings about their reliability and validity. Of particular concern is their increasingly recognized small associations with children's academic school readiness. Considerable recent attention has been paid to the possible reasons for these modest associations, including testing for possible threshold effects and subgroup variation as well as intensive examinations of scoring methods and inter-rater reliability criteria (e.g., exact versus within-one agreement). This attention has led to some revisions, although as yet the field lacks definitive evidence of solutions to the limitations of existing measures.

At the same time, the development of new measures of quality offers promise and innovation. Examples include an early learning observation system being developed to assess aspects of classroom processes and instruction at the individual child and classroom levels (Early Learning Network, 2017), the Teacher and Child Observation in Preschool (TOP/COP) measures that assess both child- and teacher-level aspects of

classroom quality (Bilbrey, Vorhaus, & Farran, 2007; Farran, 2014), continued efforts to develop and evaluate content-specific measures, including around the teaching of language, literacy, math, and emotional competencies, and attention to cultural and contextual variation, including provisions for English Language Learners and measuring quality in international settings. Technological and methodological advances are also being applied to study classroom quality, including the use of full-day streams of video, applications of generalizability theory, modeling with item response theory approaches, and large-scale meta-analyses.

For this special issue, the Quarterly is soliciting manuscripts describing rigorous studies that either:

1. offer novel syntheses of past efforts to define and measure classroom quality
2. provide new empirical evidence of current and recent measurement strategies
3. present rich descriptions of innovative approaches for conceptualizing and assessing classroom quality in the future.

The focus is on assessments of learning environments, including those that aggregate to the classroom level, focus on teachers or teaching teams, or consider individual children's experiences.Guest Editors, Drs. Rachel A. Gordon and Dale Farran anticipate featuring recent work on assessing practices in preschool-aged classrooms to promote children's academic and socio-emotional school readiness, but will consider high-quality articles regardless of children's ages (e.g. infant/toddlers vs. preschoolers), setting types (center-based vs. family child care), and content foci (e.g., math, self-regulation, health), as long as the studies use rigorous strategies and innovative frameworks for developing and testing new measures. Regardless of the age, setting type, and content focus of measurement, studies that grapple with cross-context variation will also be considered. Drs. Gordon and Farran will exclude broad-based, multifaceted assessments of program-level quality, such as Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (which were the focus of a 2015 special issue of ECRQ), and will also carefully attend to whether proposals extend beyond those covered in the 2013 special section of ECRQ on quality in family child care.

Examples of the kinds of studies of particular interest include those that:

- Comprehensively describe the conceptual rationale and detailed strategies for new approaches to measuring classroom quality.
- Examine contextual variation with multi-method cross-cultural approaches or by testing for measurement invariance in theoretically informed ways, including rigorous evidence about local adaptations.

- Pedagogically explain and empirically illustrate the value of using state-of-the-art psychometric and meta-analytic techniques.
- Synthesize past measurement strategies in novel ways by applying theories and insights from multiple disciplines, including policy and legal studies; elementary or secondary education; and, sociology, anthropology or cross-cultural psychology.

For this Special Issue, all prospective authors should submit a "pre-submission" proposal of no more than 1500 words (plus up to two tables and/or figures) that explains the planned paper. Prospective authors will be selected based on these proposals, and will be invited to submit a full paper. Full manuscripts will undergo double-blind review as per the usual procedures for this journal.

Proposals must be submitted between July 1, 2018 and September 30, 2018 by email to the Guest Editors at ragordon@uic.edu and dale.farran@Vanderbilt.Edu (please do not submit proposals to EES). Selection of authors/papers will be made by October 31, 2018 with full manuscripts due no later than February 28, 2019.

Submission Deadline: September 30, 2018

For questions or feedback regarding proposal ideas, please email Dr. Rachel A. Gordon, Guest Editor, or Dr. Gary Resnick, Special Content Editor.

To submit papers, please visit the Submission site.

Early Childhood Research Quarterly Guide for Authors.