



Southeast Evaluation Association Newsletter

2015 SEA Workshop Conversations

by Dr. Michelle Chandrasekhar

At this year’s Annual Workshop, we had a packed two days of sharing ideas, experiences, tips, and lessons learned from an interesting and varied group of presenters and participants! The sequential workshop format allowed each of us to participate in every session. It was a good way to build on previous presentations, and to learn more about the other participants.



Photo by Elizabeth Winslow

Below are some of the points shared from this year’s Annual Workshop.

“There are many methods for evaluation that could be applied to our work. For example, the discrepancy evaluation model aims to make evaluation activities more accessible.”

The discrepancy model examines the difference between planned outcomes and goals, and actual outcomes. It is goal-oriented, scalable, and simple to explain to clients. Stakeholders see it as user-friendly. They also found it more intuitive to compare what they say with what they do.

“Building collaborative relationships are important for the overall evaluation of programs.”

Three factors can improve the quality of data: 1) facilitating interviews by talking with people onsite; 2) taking time to build connections with clients and stakeholders; and 3) working with clients to dispel false perceptions about evaluation. Some of these perceptions include the following: “waste of time,” “done just to meet a mandate,” “always focused wrong – doesn’t add value,” and “not worth the resources used.”

“Taking local data and ensuring that that data can be brought back together for

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“To advocate and promote evaluation and evidence-based policy making at international, regional, national and local levels.”

Upcoming Events

- July TBA** Call for Fall Newsletter Contributors
- November TBA** Call for Winter Newsletter Contributors
- December TBA** SEA Holiday Social
- Jan/Feb TBA** 2016 Annual Workshop

Upcoming Webinar

Case Studies: Approaches to Sampling and Case Selection

Wednesday, May 27

11:30am - 12:30pm

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The President's Message

By Dr. Elizabeth Winslow, SEA President



I am very pleased to serve as SEA's President for 2015. I want to thank Dr. Barbara Gill, Past President, for her leadership in 2014 and her assistance in a smooth office transition. Under Dr. Gill's guidance, SEA held numerous webinars and in-person programs, as well as the successful February 2015 Annual Workshop. SEA remained fiscally sound and grew in membership. Additionally, Dr. Gill facilitated streamlining the association's bylaws, and she developed updated board position descriptions. I am grateful that she remains on the board.

I would also like to thank outgoing board members Dr. Fred Seamon (Past President) and David Summers (Treasurer). I greatly appreciate their service and dedication to SEA. I welcome new board members Dr. Portia Campos (Treasurer), Dr. Michelle Chandrasekhar (Secretary), Jessica Tice (State Sector Representative), and Marina Byrd (Program Committee Co-Chair). Finally, I extend thanks to board members continuing to serve: Nathaniel Myers (President-Elect), Jennifer Johnson (Program Committee Co-Chair), Dr. Bonnie Swan (Program Committee Co-Chair), Sheena Horton (Private Sector Representative), Dr. Moya Alfonso (University Sector Representative), Jason Lawrence (Student Sector Representative), Byron Greene (Local Sector Representative), and Dr. Linda Schrader (SEA-AEA Liaison). Sheena Horton (Newsletter Coordinator) and Sean Little (Editor) will continue to serve on SEA's newsletter staff. Kathy McGuire has graciously offered to be SEA's Membership/Volunteer Coordinator; we would like to thank Kathy for assuming this role, and to thank Sheena Horton for managing our membership services during the interim. I will be relying on all of your collective Institutional memory!

With the help of a talented board encompassing both continuity and newness, I wish to continue Dr. Gill's initiatives, particularly membership growth and financial responsibility. I also hope to develop manuals to augment position descriptions to ensure efficient succession of board members in future years.

The Program Committee has already produced a popular webinar ("Capturing Student Voices, Teaching Them to Listen: Effective Strategies for Conducting Focus Groups on Campus") this year, as well as an in-person workshop ("Creating Your Professional Image: Applying For and Getting the Job"). There is more to come. I also hope to expand the Annual Workshop to a larger space to accommodate more presentations and attendees.

I welcome your involvement. Please let me know your suggestions for programs or other SEA initiatives. I hope to see you soon at an SEA event!

Get Linked! by Sheena Horton

Padlet

Padlet offers an easy way to connect and collaborate with others in real-time online. This secure, web-based application allows users to share notes, drawings, diagrams, upload files, manage users' access, view user analytics, and other mapping and planning tools. Padlet can be added as a plug-in to your current browser. Other Padlet applications available include a school-based version (Backpack) and a work-based version (Briefcase).

<https://padlet.com/>

Eval Central

Eval Central is, simply, a blog of various evaluation blogs. This website allows users to browse multiple evaluation blogs all in one place, and offers subscription services to avoid missing any new posts. Eval Central also invites other evaluation bloggers to submit their articles for review and posting.

www.evalcentral.com

Trade Pub

This website offers a wide variety of free IT magazines, white papers, downloads, and podcasts across a number of disciplines. Trade Pub is a great resource for accessing "quick key" and "shortcut" download guides for software programs, latest technology news and releases, and provides users with access to over 1,000 related partner websites.

www.tradepub.com

ProjectManagers.Net

ProjectManagers.Net provides various project management resources from across the internet. The website offers many links to project management guides, research, technology, tips, job opportunities, blogs, events, professional development opportunities, and networking directories.

www.projectmanagers.net



2015 Executive Board Officers

The Executive Board of the Southeast Evaluation Association shall consist of the President, the President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, the immediate Past-President, the Chairpersons of Committees, and the Sector Representatives. The Board shall be the legislative and advocacy body for the Association, and shall have general supervision over the affairs of the Association. -SEA Bylaws



Dr. Elizabeth Winslow - President

Dr. Elizabeth Winslow is Vice President for Research and Policy Analysis at Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. She is also Managing Director of the Florida Independent College Fund. Prior to her work in the non-profit sector, she was a Policy Analyst at the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). She earned a Ph.D. in Public Administration in 2009 at Florida State University. This is her second year on the board.



Nathaniel Myers – President-Elect

Nathaniel "Nate" Myers is a Contract Manager for Services to the Elderly and Disabled at the State of Florida's Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA). He routinely conducts annual reviews of client and agency data. In addition, he develops policies, procedures, and performance metrics. He also serves on advisory teams for service planning, data integrity, and provider performance evaluation. He made his foray into public health at Emory University's Cancer Prevention Research Center as a field researcher. He has directed grant-deliverable activities at DOEA for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and served on the Department's monitoring team. He received his MS in Demography and Population Health and his BS in Economics from Florida State University. When he is not visiting agencies and clients around the state, he is immersed in great fiction. He also engages in strategic planning for other local non-profits, and the care and well-being of his small but growing family. This is his second year on the board.



Dr. Barbara Gill - Past President

Dr. Barbara Gill is the Director of Educational Research in the Office of Institutional Effectiveness at Tallahassee Community College (TCC). In that role, she assists instructional and non-instructional divisions of the TCC in assessing and evaluating their programs and services. She is a member of the College's Institutional Accountability Committee, and she serves as TCC's accreditation liaison to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. Prior to joining TCC, she was a Research Associate at the Learning Systems Institute at Florida State University. She holds a Master's Degree from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. from Florida State University. She has served on the board since 2009.

2015 Executive Board Officers

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Dr. Michelle Chandrasekhar - Secretary

Dr. Michelle Chandrasekhar is an Independent Evaluation Consultant with strengths in Institutional Effectiveness, Accreditation, Assessment of Learning, and Faculty Professional Development. Prior to returning to Tallahassee in 2014, she was the Director for Institutional Planning, Assessment, and Research at Olympic College. In addition to her work experience, she has volunteered support for non-profit groups such as the Olympic College Foundation, the South Kitsap County Commissioner's Office, the West Sound Harper Estuary Restoration Project, the Bremerton Police Department, and Chiles High School. She earned her Ph.D. in Educational Research and Program Evaluation and her M.S. in Psychology-Neuroscience, both from Florida State University. This is her first year serving on the board.



Dr. Portia Campos - Treasurer

Dr. Portia Campos is an adjunct professor and internship coordinator at the Askew School of Public Administration and Policy at Florida State University. She is also assistant managing editor of *Public Administration Review*. In her capacity as postdoctoral research associate, Dr. Campos oversaw the logistics for the Askew School's Local Governance Lab lecture series at Florida State University. She earned her Ph.D. in Public Administration from Rutgers University in Newark, NJ, and her research interests include social capital and civic engagement. This is her first year on the board.



2015 Board Sector Representatives



Sheena Horton - Private Sector

Sheena Horton is a Senior Analyst for the Human Capital Division with MGT of America, Inc., and conducts project planning and management, onsite consulting, organizational reviews, classification and compensation studies, among other evaluation projects. She earned her M.S. in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Florida State University, and her BA in both Sociology and English from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. This is her fourth year on the board.

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2015 Board Sector Representatives

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Dr. Moya Alfonso - University Sector

Dr. Moya Alfonso is an Assistant Professor at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health, Georgia Southern University. She has had an interdisciplinary training in public health and educational research and evaluation, and has received formal training in project/program evaluation, and in the creation of logic models for assessment and evaluation. She has conducted formative and summative program evaluations for numerous adolescent health interventions, with emphasis on physical activity and substance use prevention. Prior to coming to Georgia Southern University, Dr. Alfonso served as Co-Director of the Methods and Evaluation Unit for the CDC funded Florida Prevention Research Center at the University of South Florida. During her tenure at the Prevention Research Center, Dr. Alfonso led the evaluation of VERB™ Summer Scorecard, a CDC recognized promising program for increasing physical activity among 8- to 13-year-olds, and served as the local evaluator for a multi-site evaluation of the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant (SPF SIG) alcohol reduction program. Dr. Alfonso currently serves as a Prevention Fellow for the Florida Prevention Research Center. This is her third year on the board.



J. Byron Greene - Local Sector

Byron Greene serves as the Associate Director of the Florida-Georgia Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (FGLSAMP) and grant-funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF). FGLSAMP is a collaboration of 14 institutions of higher education with the primary mission to increase the number of underrepresented minorities receiving degrees in science, technology engineering, and mathematics (STEM). He has worked with FGLSAMP for the past 16 years. Over the years, Byron has served in various professional capacities related to diversity in STEM initiatives, including the U.S. Dept. of Energy; NASA; universities and colleges; and private consulting. Byron also works within the Tallahassee community serving on boards and committees which include: Grace Mission Episcopal Outreach ministries; Diocesan Council for the Episcopal Diocese of Florida; Mary Brogan Museum; Knight Creative Communities Institute; and is serving as a member of the Tallahassee Downtown Redevelopment Committee advisory board. Byron is a graduate of Flagler College with a B.A. in Business Administration.

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2015 Board Sector Representatives

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Jason Lawrence - Student Sector

Jason Lawrence is a second-year Master's of Public Administration candidate at Florida State University, who will complete his studies and re-enter the job market in December 2015. He currently manages federal grant contracts for the Florida Office of the Attorney General. As a member of SEA, he presented two independent research projects, "Gammon's Law: Determining Bureaucratic Displacement in Florida's HIV/AIDS Prevention Efforts," and "Overcoming Obstacles to Digital Public Service Delivery," in 2014 and 2015, respectively. After completing his MPA, he aspires to work as a policy analyst within a legislative or executive office at any level of government. He received his B.A. in Political Science from Florida A&M University in 2011. This is his second year on the board.



Jessica Tice - State Sector

Jessica Tice is the Research Coordinator in the Bureau of Planning & Evaluation for the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. In that capacity, she leads a team of demographers, mappers, and statistical analysts in the Research Unit, and serves as the project manager and lead investigator for a wide variety of projects. She is a proud alumna of Florida State University, holding undergraduate degrees in Humanities (B.A.) and Sociology (B.S.), as well as a graduate degree in Sociology (M.S.), and Ph.D. coursework and ongoing research in health and aging. She has held research positions for more than fifteen years in the public sector and in several different agencies. She is pleased to serve SEA in the capacity of State Government Representative. This is her first year on the board.



2015 Program Committee



Marina Byrd - Co-Chair

Marina Byrd is a Legislative Policy Analyst with the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). She has a Master's of Public Policy and Administration from the University of Kentucky and a BA in Economics from Georgetown College. She became interested in state government policy and research while working as a graduate fellow at the Council of State Governments. This is her first year as Co-Chair.



Jennifer Johnson - Co-Chair

Jennifer Johnson is a Staff Director with the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). Since 1999, she has conducted and led evaluations and policy analyses in health and human services. Jennifer has evaluated policy issues related to both Florida's Medicaid program and public health system. In addition, she assists with the publication of OPPAGA's electronic newsletter, *The Florida Monitor Weekly*. She has served on the board since 2009.



Dr. Bonnie Swan - Co-Chair

Bonnie Swan is a program evaluator and serves as Director for the Program Evaluation and Educational Research (PEER) Group at the University of Central Florida. She has been involved with recent projects funded by a number of government agencies, academic institutions, and foundations. She received her Ph.D. in Education and her M.Ed. in Mathematics Education from the University of Central Florida. She has a unique perspective as both an educational researcher and an evaluation consultant, arising from her research on evaluation, mentoring, online learning, teacher-labor markets, educational equity, and professional development, as well as her experience teaching at the secondary and post-secondary levels. This is her third year on the board and as a Program Committee Co-Chair.



2015 Membership/Volunteer Coordinator



Kathy McGuire

Kathy McGuire serves as deputy coordinator for the Florida Legislature's Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). Prior to her position as deputy coordinator, she served as staff director of OPPAGA's criminal justice policy area. For over 20 years, she conducted and led a wide variety of program evaluations and policy analyses. Ms. McGuire is Past Chair of the National Legislative Program Evaluation Society, and she is Past President of the Southeast Evaluation Association. She attended the Legislative Staff Management Institute at the University of Southern California.



2015 SEA Workshop Conversations

by Dr. Michelle Chandrasekhar

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a meta-evaluation."

While stakeholder perceptions influence policymakers, local data has the greatest influence on policymakers. Counts, surveys, and interviews, as well as population and business statistics help to set a relevant context for evaluation reporting. Doing this requires a lot of upfront planning such as establishing baseline data for comparisons. A meta-evaluation is another way to apply lessons learned to new situations.

"Logic models for guest presenters match learning outcomes in individual sessions to overall goals for training events and create action goals."

One way to practice quality control is to use a logic model to share the intent of the training and to collect information about what presenters and collaborators intended to do. The likelihood for implementing the training would be increased if people added a requirement for the participants to draft an action plan before leaving training. This would let them know that they will be assessed later.

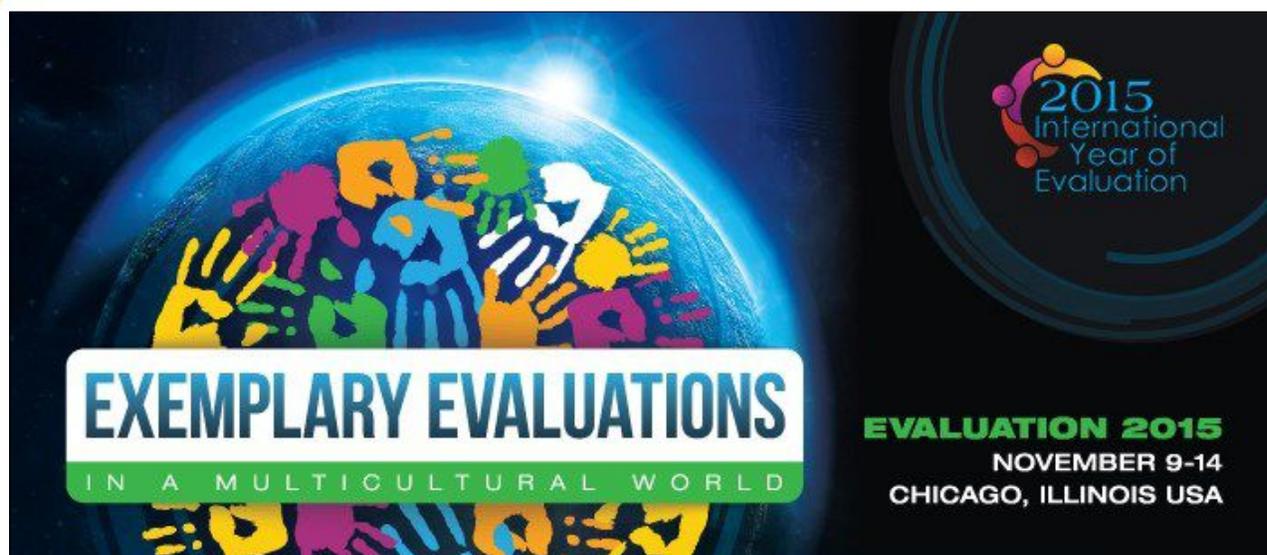
"If you have to make exceptions, then you do not have the truth."

We saw this statement echoed in the lessons learned and tips. For example, clean data depends upon shared definitions for terms. Language and acronyms are culture bound. Pilot testing or previewing material with local collaborators can identify some problems. If early data indicate a need to re-frame an evaluation, be prepared to re-frame it. Programs may appear highly successful, but they often need better data describing their participants, and not just their outcomes.

Because the workshop featured a mix of evaluators, there were many individual takeaways. The directory of Workshop participants provided a route for contacting presenters as well as other participants, and was a good reminder and reflective of this final comment: "Biggest take away: I am not alone."



AEA News



More than 30 Voluntary Organizations of Professional Evaluation (VOPEs), including the American Evaluation Association (AEA), EvalPartners, UN Agencies, and donor agencies have declared 2015 the International Year of Evaluation. AEA invites evaluators, evaluation scholars, students, evaluation sponsors, and evaluation users from around the world to assemble November 9-14, 2015 in Chicago at the annual AEA conference to share and learn from successes of the international discipline and practice of evaluation. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about exemplary evaluations, enabling evaluation environments, evaluation policies, evaluation theories and methods, and research on evaluation from a range of cultures and regions throughout the world.



AEA 2015 Summer Evaluation Institute

May 31- June 3, 2015

Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia Hotel

4355 Ashford Dunwoody Road, Atlanta, Georgia 30346

This event is appropriate for beginning-level and intermediate-level evaluators, advanced evaluators wishing to refresh their skills or investigate new topics, consumers of evaluation such as funders and program administrators, and students in the social sciences wishing to explore an applied discipline with great employment potential. Registration and Housing are now open. Registration rates are listed below.

	AEA Members	Non-Members	Full-Time Students
Conference	\$395	\$480	\$250
Pre-Institute Workshops	\$150	\$150	\$150



Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach

Book Review by Sean Little

Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach, by Ruthellen Josselson. The Guilford Press, 2013. 206 pp. \$74.00 Cloth; \$29.00 Paper.

This book focuses on qualitative interviewing as a relationship rather than a technique. Josselson uses five themes to organize her discussion of this relationship: 1) the exchange nature of the interview, 2) the reflexive interviewer, 3) the interviewer's and the participant's co-creation of the interview, 4) the empathetic stance, 5) the techniques for a good interview, and 6) the ethics of qualitative interviewing.

The Exchange Nature of the Interview

Josselson argues that the interviewer seeks meaningful data, but the participant (Josselson's preferred term for the interviewee) wants to be heard, to have someone listen to them, and to have a chance to tell their story. The participant exchanges data for attention, but this exchange is not one of equals. The interview has greater value for the interviewer than for the participant. As a result, the interviewer should always accommodate the participant.

Josselson's discussion of this exchange suffers from a major omission. Interviewers sometimes pay participants money for their time. Paid participants may want to tell their story, but payment changes the dynamics of most relationships, exacerbating class differences between the interviewer and the participant. In some ways, it recreates classic colonialism. The participants provide the raw materials. Then the interviewer transforms those raw materials into a finished product of the knowledge economy.

The Reflexive Interviewer

The interviewer will hear disturbing things. In order to contain the emotional charge of the

interview, the interviewer has to manage their own anxiety. Josselson suggests a maximum of two interviews per day as they can be emotionally draining.

Racial and age differences between the participant and the interviewer can be very volatile. According to Josselson, the interviewer should "accept" these differences rather than "camouflage" them. An interviewer can turn this difference to their advantage, if they emphasize their need for explanatory information.

The Interviewer's and the Participant's Co-Creation of the Interview

The interviewer and the participant co-create the interview. The interviewer does not come with a standard set of question, but with one trigger question to begin the interview. After the trigger question, the interviewer should be responding to the participant's material, matching the participant's words as closely as possible. In order to obtain high quality data, the interviewer should channel and contain the participant's reflection on their experience. Josselson labels this awareness as the interviewer's empathetic stance.

The Empathetic Stance

The empathetic stance forms the core skill of the qualitative interviewer. If the interviewer fails to channel and contain the participant's reflection on their experience, the interviewer can collect no meaningful data.

Empathy has both cognitive (taking another's perspective) and emotional (vicariously feeling another's experience) components. Empathy requires a response to what the participants say, how they say it, and what they fail to say. The interviewer has to attend to their own and the

Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry: A Relational Approach

Book Review by Sean Little

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participant's verbal content and emotional tone.

Empathy differs from identification; the interviewer should not confuse them. Identification occurs when the interviewer assumes equivalence between their experience and that of the participant. This interviewer may state this verbally or assume it non-verbally. The participant is an "other". The interviewer's job is to understand them. If the researcher does not, the participant may begin to feel invalidated. This becomes particularly important when the interviewer and the participant differ on key demographic variables.

The Techniques for a Good Interview

Rich information requires specific detail rather than generalities. When a participant asks for clarification, it can provide information about how the participant categorizes the experience in question and how the participant links aspects of that experience.

When asking questions, the interviewer should use the participant's own words to formulate the next questions. Using their own words maintains the flow and helps to avoid contaminating the participant's material with the researcher's input.

The interviewer has to be present cognitively and emotionally. This requires the interviewer to work on three parallel tracks: present to the participant, cognizant of the research question, and mindful of the mental notes made during the interview. The interviewer has to be fully "there" with the participant during the interview. Analysis comes later.

Immediately after the participant has left the interview, the interviewer should record all their impressions and mental notes about the

interview. These include observations, reactions, insights, the setting, and the participant's appearance. If not done immediately, they will forget it.

According to Josselson, interviewing requires privacy, which, in turn, requires a door. A coffee shop or park cannot provide privacy.

The Ethics of Qualitative Interviewing

While research ethics guidelines frequently emphasize, "doing no harm", Josselson argues for the positive value of being heard. The participant should leave the interview feeling valued.

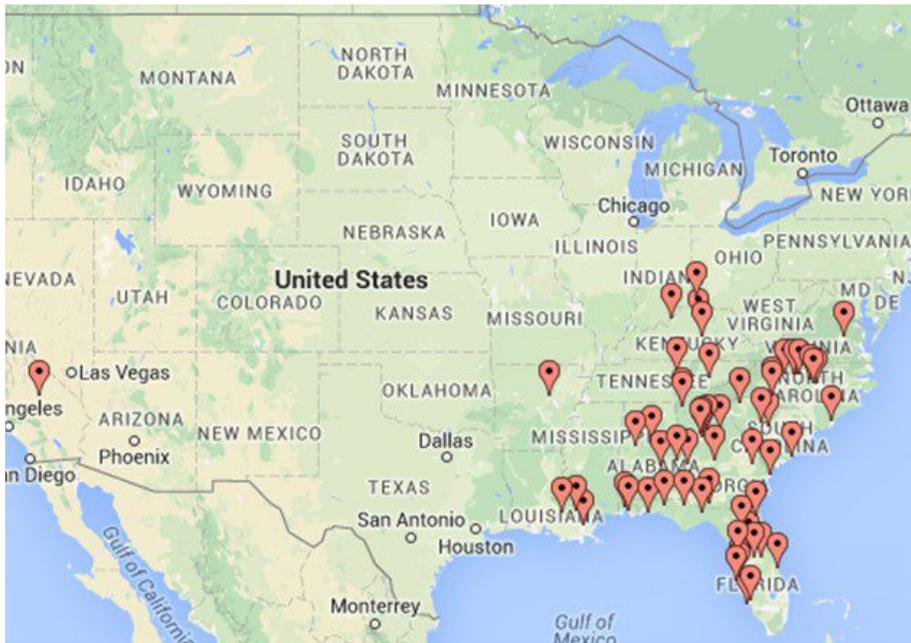
The interviewer may feel that it is important to let participants see the research to which they have contributed, but this raises serious issues. Participants may try to decode disguised identities, raising serious problems of confidentiality.

This book not only provides a great deal of information, but also a very different perspective on qualitative interviewing. Most academic texts focus on method or technique rather than the relational aspects of research. Reading this book felt different. Emphasizing the relational aspects of interviewing really brought forth differences between qualitative and quantitative methods. It placed the participant/subject at the center of research. And in evaluation, the participant/subject should be the ultimate beneficiary of the research.



SEA Membership Map

As of April 10, 2015



SEA continues to experience a rapid growth in membership, as well as reaching new member locations throughout the United States.

Volunteer with SEA!

SEA is a volunteer organization and has a variety of volunteer opportunities available throughout the year, including contributing to the SEA Newsletter, reaching out to members and potential new members, and assisting with program and workshop activities.

If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more, you may contact SEA at seacoordinator@southeastevaluation.org or fill out a volunteer interest form on SEA's website at <http://www.southeastevaluation.org/volunteer>.

Contact Us

Southeastern Evaluation Association
P. O. Box 10125
Tallahassee, FL 32302

Email:

seacoordinator@southeastevaluation.org

Website:

www.southeastevaluation.org

The **Southeast Evaluation Association** (SEA) is a regional affiliate of the American Evaluation Association. We represent evaluators and evaluation-related professionals from the state, university, school system (local) and private sectors. Our members come from a variety of backgrounds: policy analysis, program auditing, teaching, program evaluation, and performance measurement. SEA's annual conference attracts nationally recognized speakers and participants from the entire southeast region. Several agencies use our programs and conferences as low cost training and networking opportunities for their employees.

Annual membership (\$30; \$10 for full-time students) offers reduced registration fees for the Annual Conference, Pre-Conference Workshop, Essential Skills Workshop, and the various training sessions held throughout the year. Members also periodically receive a newsletter throughout the year. The newsletter is a great way to keep up with the SEA activities and innovative research in the field of evaluation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to [email](mailto:seacoordinator@southeastevaluation.org) us.

Suggestions - SEA welcomes all ideas for topics for future workshops, brown bag lunches, newsletter articles, and conference sessions. Please contact the SEA Coordinator at seacoordinator@southeastevaluation.org with your ideas!

Newsletter Committee

Sean Little, Sheena Horton, and Shaun Horton

Contributing Authors

Dr. Elizabeth Winslow, Sheena Horton, Dr. Michelle Chandrasekhar, and Sean Little