The E.F. Lindquist Award
Honoring 50 years of excellence in education research

September 2022
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ACT’s North Star

We exist to fight for fairness in education and create a world where everyone can discover and fulfill their potential.

Education has power - a power that changes lives forever. It creates opportunities that lift up individuals and their families and it sparks societal change that echoes through generations to come. From our grassroots, we have fought the good fight for equity in education, and we remain devoted to helping anyone that struggles to access that power. This is what matters to us, and we must do better - we’ve never been more sure of our purpose.

Today, too many students, families, and educators are battling to overcome systemic inequalities, such as discrimination and a lack of access to knowledge and resources. Coupled with increasing socioeconomic uncertainty, those most in need continue to be held back by widening of opportunity and equity gaps. Our true strength comes from sharing our expertise in research and analytics, and then partnering to learn, adapt, and do what needs to be done.

Our mission is to help people be successful in their education and careers. We believe, more than ever before, education can deliver success on an unlimited scale. We care deeply about every learner’s journey, and we strive to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to fulfill their potential and become the heroes they know they can be. For budding minds, the thinkers and the doers, we reveal the answers they can’t find and widen their understanding of where learning can take them. By playing our part, we help ensure that everyone can discover and fulfill their potential.

As we develop integrated solutions, we empower educators and support learners at all stages of their journey. We help to create life-changing opportunities and remove barriers that hold back too many people. These innovations in how we enable education will be the catalysts that transform generations to come. We are all-in to create a world that values and encourages each individual’s abilities and potential, and a society that is fairer and more equitable.
The Lindquist Award

“Accurate measurement of the results of instruction is a fundamental step in the teaching process.”

– E.F. Lindquist, 1932

Fifty years ago, in 1972, ACT and the American Educational Research Association (AERA) created the E.F. Lindquist Award, honoring outstanding applied or theoretical researchers and practitioners in testing and measurement. Dr. Lindquist was a legendary scholar, scientist, professor, and practitioner who co-founded ACT in 1959.

“Awards shine a light on the work being done to solve the largest challenges facing our field and our country,” said Janet Godwin, ACT CEO. “To be able to simultaneously recognize the legacy of Dr. Lindquist and the contributions of today’s pioneering leaders in assessment and testing research is a true privilege.”

“Lindquist clearly came from a tradition of seeking to do better,” said Dr. Felice J. Levine, executive director, AERA. Lauding Lindquist’s unshakeable and occasionally uncomfortable commitment to seeking the truth, Levine added, “I think one of the most exciting parts about the field as it is now constituted has been a level of self-criticality.”

Like Lindquist himself, many of the Lindquist Award winners exhibit striking combinations of confidence, courage, and commitment that have propelled them throughout their careers.

Dr. Jamal Abedi, an immigrant to the U.S., devoted his talents to making life fairer – and better – for English learners. While he reached the height of his profession, as embodied by his 2016 Lindquist Award, as a young scholar he experienced “the pain of when I had the content, but I wasn’t able to explain. I was so disappointed.”

“I’ve taken up kind of edgy topics that people would stay away from,” said Dr. Eva Baker, who was recognized with the award in 2013. “In the beginning of the 90s, we were looking at the whole business of visualization in artificial intelligence and comparing it to standard tests, which was quite innovative at the time. And people thought it was, you know, a little crazy.”
In addition to honoring a body of research of an empirical, theoretical, or integrative nature, the Lindquist Award provides direction for future researchers, whose jobs are not getting any easier.

“One of the great virtues of the American educational system is that it is full of second chances,” said Dr. Edward Haertel, who received the award in 2012. “It is messy. We don’t make early decisions that are irrevocable.”

“Test scores alone shouldn’t be what you want. They’re a clue but don’t tell you the answer. Instead, they tell you that you need to go into schools and find out why scores are what they are,” said Dr. Daniel Koretz, the Lindquist recipient in 2022. “People have been unwilling to do that because it’s too much work. It’s too expensive. It’s easier just to say, ‘We have the scores. We know the answer.’ But we don’t.”

“We need to understand that we are often viewed with suspicion, for good reasons and bad,” said Dr. Henry Braun, awarded the Lindquist in 2021. “We have to tell our stories in ways that are both complex and compelling, but also remain true to our professional norms. And that’s a very tough row to hoe.”

“There are huge equity and ethical concerns with whatever we do, and a recognition that cognition, motivation, and affect aren’t independent little beads on a chain,” said Dr. Richard Shavelson, who received the award in 2011. “There are huge commonalities, but there are also huge differences – and we trample them from the mainstream.”

“We try to minimize measurement error to make reliable measurements. We try to develop measurements that are valid. These foundations are the same,” said Dr. Hua-Hua Chang, the 2017 Lindquist recipient. “In the old days they had the same dreams, but they did not have today’s better tools to make the dreams come true.”

“Education research is doing a better job of understanding what assets and diverse learning capacities learners are bringing to the table,” said Levine. “There is also increasing evidence and awareness of what creates risk, and the structures and environments that facilitate comfort and confidence.”
“Professionals need to hear from and account for diverse perspectives as they make decisions about research, policies, and practices that have real effects on students,” said Godwin. “We know we cannot address today’s demographic, historical, and systemic imperatives on our own, so ACT is always looking to join forces with like-minded allies like AERA.”

“The pioneers in education testing called the 1925 conference [in] Iowa City to discuss principles that could be used to develop the field of educational testing as a field of systematic science…”

“Although Lindquist was only 24 at that time and a newcomer to testing, he openly questioned this assumption [that educational achievement followed a bell-shaped curve].

“He pointed out that teachers worked hard to get every child to learn [their] lessons and it was likely that this resulted in a skewed distribution with more students achieving than those who did not.

“This view seemed sensible to me, too, but our elders gave little or no attention to the protests.”


Fortunately, education has long featured researchers willing to take on these vital challenges.

“The 2022 E.F. Lindquist Award, for example, didn’t just mark a milestone in the career of Daniel M. Koretz,” said Godwin. “It also presented an opportunity to learn from Dr. Koretz’s transformative findings on score inflation, the assessment of students with disabilities, and other compelling issues in education assessment.”

“I think the group has been defined by talented, reflective, and accomplished individuals who seek to shift paradigms,” said Levine. “Award winners are emblematic of where the field is, and where the field needs to be going.”
Power of Education

“Education has power - a power that changes lives forever.

“It creates opportunities that lift up individuals and their families and sparks societal change that echoes through generations to come.”

“Scholarship and entrance examinations may and often do influence high school teaching practices, they may and do influence student and parent attitudes, they may be and are used by the colleges to help define their own tasks, they can and will be used as placement and guidance instruments.

“In consideration of this, scholarship and entrance examinations should be built, not just with these possible uses and influences ‘in mind,’ but with the deliberate intent of maximizing their usefulness for all of these purposes.”

– E.F. Lindquist, 1958

E.F. Lindquist was born in 1901, a time when fewer than 15 percent of American adults had earned a high school diploma. While cynics may argue that education in the 21st century hasn’t changed much since the 19th century, that’s only true if we ignore contemporary technology, curricula, student demographics, global benchmarking, and academic expectations that extend to at least 12th grade – and for many students, far beyond.

Assessment needs to move fast to keep pace with the education evolution, and even its revolution.

“The measures that have been used as the indicators of progress have been designed to be stable and not to reflect what’s going on in the schools,” said Eva Baker. “Instead of test-driven instruction, I would rather have instruction-driven testing – the other way around.”

The tension between testing and teaching is not new – or necessarily negative. Lindquist himself knew that once he started testing students at scale in the 1930s, neighboring principals and superintendents would soon compare scores. Suddenly, schools got serious about providing students with the learning resources they had long needed but often went without.
“You could go to any school in the state, and [you’d] hardly ever find a globe or atlas or encyclopedia; even dictionaries were pretty rare,” recalled E.F. Lindquist in 1969. “But under the Influence of the Iowa Testing Programs [a precursor to the ACT], you’ll now find a globe and similar study helps in every classroom.”

“Lindquist’s interest was in getting better resources in educational environments,” said Felice Levine. “The capacity of families to provide for children has an impact in the school. If you’re hardly scraping it together, it’s not a family problem. It’s not a parental problem. It’s a societal problem.”

“The more individual and group differences are recognized, the better assessment we have,” said Jamal Abedi. “So, one-size-fits-all is something we have to avoid.”

Lindquist proved education does have the power to change lives. Throughout his career, he strived to improve instruction in every classroom, to democratize opportunity for students from all backgrounds, and to transform assessment by using technology that would have been unimaginable in his youth – technology he helped invent.

“ACT is grounded in more than 60 years of research,” said Janet Godwin. “Together with our colleagues in the field of education research, we are focused on uncovering and addressing the systemic issues that prevent students from reaching their full potential. Research is a key element of that effort.”
“Today, too many students, families, and educators are battling to overcome systemic inequalities, such as discrimination and a lack of access to knowledge and resources.

“Coupled with increasing socioeconomic uncertainty, those most in need continue to be held back by the widening of opportunity and equity gaps.”

“The classroom teacher should not be criticized for not presenting content or following organization for which [they lack] specific instructional materials. Nor should the pupil be penalized for not having learned something which [they never have] been given an opportunity to study.”

– E.F. Lindquist, 1933

Unequal access to education is nothing new. For most of human history, only the fortunate few had the privilege of receiving formal education, and even after public schools were established in most parts of the U.S., many students were denied high-quality education by virtue of their incomes, zip codes, ethnicities, or other factors that kept them from realizing their potential.

Education research has been central in uncovering and reducing those gaps in equity – but education researchers would be the first to say there’s a long way to go.

“Equity, of course, is central to accountability testing,” said Edward Haertel. “The goal is to try to reduce achievement gaps. Paradoxically, it’s that very accountability testing that draws attention to those achievement gaps and that reifies the gap as something that needs to be addressed.”

The opportunities to address inequity and gaps in achievement can be found at every level of education. Hua-Hua Chang saw the challenges facing undergraduate students in introductory science courses who struggled to receive the individualized instruction they needed to master the material.

Instead of surrendering to the inevitable, Chang devoted his research to helping all students succeed.
“In many STEM classrooms we’re talking about a gigantic class size with 1,000 students,” said Chang. “We developed web-based cognitive diagnostic systems so students can sign in to do exercises, and the system constantly provides information about strengths and weaknesses – and the students used this system to get better grades.”

“Students need to see themselves and their journeys represented at all levels of education and the workforce – especially in influential roles,” said Janet Godwin. “Surrounding ourselves with a full range of colleagues can help ensure that we keep equity top of mind in our work and do not leave behind populations that have been traditionally marginalized.”

In addition to longstanding issues of inequity, each generation encounters new challenges – such as the digital divide – that separate some students from the tools needed for success in modern classrooms. The education implications of the COVID-19 pandemic made these gaps wider, deeper, and all-the-more urgent to address.

The significant opportunity now is that our new experiences and insights build on what we already know, and core principles can be complemented by what may first appear as overwhelming complexity.

“If we become more integrative, more open to different perspectives, more open to different people and ethnicities,” said Richard Shavelson, “and if we’re able to incorporate that into a world in which people are guaranteed at least a minimal level of living – and we can do that through education and behavioral science – that’s great.”

“I’m very optimistic,” said Jamal Abedi. “Take a look at the literature for assessment for language impact. Before the 1990s there was rarely the attention paid to these issues. After that there was growing attention. So, I’m hoping that 30 years from now we are going to be much clearer.”
Innovation and Empowerment

“As we develop integrated solutions, we empower educators and support learners at all stages of their journey. We help to create life-changing opportunities and remove barriers that hold back too many people.

“These innovations in how we enable education will be the catalysts that transform generations to come.”

“The best way of preparing for the examination and the best way of preparing for college should be identical. The best ‘coaching’ procedure should be the same as the best instructional procedures at the high school level.”

– E.F. Lindquist, 1958

E.F. Lindquist focused his acclaimed assessments on achievement. Rather than having their fates sealed by inscrutable and immutable “aptitude,” Lindquist believed all students with access to rigorous curricula, strong instruction, and robust support systems could succeed if they applied their full talent to the task.

He also believed that assessment – or to be more precise, assessment’s role in encouraging students to master the material and practice the skills their tests were likely to cover – was essential to learning, a view that holds currency today.

“When the teacher says, ‘It’s going to be on the test,’ that influences student behavior before the test is ever given,” said Edward Haertel. “That’s the way it’s supposed to work.”

When in balance, this scholastic symbiosis seems like a force for good. However, when the testing tail starts wagging the teaching dog, trouble can ensue.

“What’s happened is exactly what Lindquist said would happen if people become familiar with the sample used to build the test,” said Daniel Koretz. “Under low-stakes conditions they don’t have a lot of reason to worry about the sample. But when their jobs are on the line, they do, and they focus on the sample rather than the domain.”
One approach that seeks to integrate teaching and testing in a constructive manner is self-directed learning. Instead of students sitting in neat rows, with every problem having a neat answer, students explore their own ideas. It may be tougher for teachers, but can be more satisfying for students.

“The minute you allow students to inquire, they can discover new things. If you don’t know the subject matter, such as biology, you’re on rocky ground, so it’s a challenge,” said Richard Shavelson. “Moreover, if you’re going to do that, you’re going to have to have assessments that parallel the guided inquiry.”

In the past few years, whatever neat rows and neat answers remain in K-12 and college classrooms have been upended by a sometimes-improvisational post-pandemic pedagogy. The new rules – or lack thereof – could affect education forever.

“I have to think that the COVID experience, where so many things were virtual and kids had more agency to go and find things rather than have the teacher be the gatekeeper, will change things,” said Eva Baker. “So, what I think will take place is what people call ‘assessment in the wild.’ It’s not going to be as formalized with number two pencils and all of that business. If we would be smart, we could find a way to integrate lots of experiences that people have.”
Collaboration and Success

“Our true strength comes from sharing our expertise in research and analytics, and then partnering to learn, adapt and do what needs to be done.

“Our mission is to help people be successful in their education and careers. We believe more than ever before, education can deliver success on an unlimited scale.”

“A yardstick should not be condemned because it does not also serve as a thermometer or stethoscope or X-ray.

“Teachers can be made to understand, and many of them already realize, that achievement tests are not generalized instruments to measure everything we want to measure in education, and where such understanding prevails the indispensable values of comparable measurements can be enjoyed, and are being enjoyed, without damages or havoc.”

– E.F. Lindquist, 1933
The Technique of Constructing Tests (commentary) American Council on Education

E.F. Lindquist was a polymath – a professor, psychometrician, inventor, and social entrepreneur (among other things). What he was not was a lone scientist locked away in his lab.

Instead, Lindquist went to where the people were – scoring thousands of tests overnight for students competing in the Iowa Brain Derby of the 1920s and 1930s (which revealed the need for faster scoring methods); working with military and academic leaders in the 1940s to provide soldiers returning from World War II with education credentials (which reinforced the need to score at scale); and collaborating in the 1950s with literal rocket scientists, among others, to develop and deploy optical mark recognition (OMR).

If you’ve ever heard the phrase, “Take out your number two pencil,” you’ve used Lindquist’s technology. OMR ushered in a new era of computerized scoring, which in turn enabled computer-based testing, computer-adaptive testing, and whatever innovations may come next.
“We’re well beyond the early days of using the computer platform as an electronic page turner,” said Edward Haertel. “But the potential of computer-based testing, especially as supported by artificial intelligence, is only beginning to be tapped. I think we’re going to find ways in the future to use computer-based testing to truly customize assessment to individual learners’ needs.”

“I think the new future is being worked out in data analytics and big data,” said Richard Shavelson. “The dream of psychometrics was to be able to get an infinite number of observations of an individual while they’re in a steady state. That doesn’t take very long for these folks.”

While unimaginable algorithmic power is being unleashed on problems once considered out of reach, people are still people. Many don’t like taking tests, and a few may not like the testers themselves.

“There is skepticism and concern about experts and expertise,” said Henry Braun. “Those of us who have expertise and believe that we can constructively contribute to the public good are facing headwinds that perhaps 20 or 30 years ago weren’t there.”

“Our goal is not to replace teachers by machine teaching,” said Hua-Hua Chang. “Our goal is to help teachers use the technology to help students learn in a more effective way.”

“I hope we’re not just going to be a set of images, but that the human part – the part we see and touch – will still be important,” said Eva Baker. “Because we’re now looking more at the integration of social and emotional skills. That whole part of what it means to be a person.”

Lindquist – who imagined a future for education that his theories could enable, but who lived in an era whose technology could not quite keep up with his dreams – would likely have agreed.

“Some of the former restrictions on the nature of usable test items are now being removed,” Lindquist said in 1968. “It is my belief that we will see in the future a real qualitative improvement in tests and that it will be made possible by the greater versatility and flexibility of computers and optical scanners…

“This is going to create some problems for the testers and the schools. However, the need for evaluation and the need for direction of instruction through objective measurement is certainly not going to diminish. I think that, for the graduate student who is looking for an area of specialization, the field of measurement presents enormous opportunities.”

Fifty years later, it still does.
What did receiving the E.F. Lindquist Award mean to you?

Personally, I was immensely gratified in receiving the award. Looking at the award recipients I recognize every prior recipient back into the mid 80s. It’s just a roster of real giants, and the same is true of the people who received the award since I have. I’m still a little amazed to find myself in that company.

-Edward H. Haertel

On one hand, you’ve got science inquiry that you’re interested in. On the other hand, you’ve got to have an assessment parallel to that. And, on the third hand, if you had three hands, you would need a psychometric theory that maps onto all of that. And that’s the kind of work that I’ve done in science education.

-Richard J. Shavelson

I came to this country from China, many years ago, as a poor student, with only 60 bucks in my pocket and … I made it. I became a PhD. I became a scientist. I became a professor. I became the first Asian American to receive the Lindquist Award. If you are working hard, you can make it.

-Hua-Hua Chang
Because I was also very skeptical about the design and the use of measures, I think I just was never accepted, so getting the Lindquist Award was a real surprise to me. I thought, “Oh my goodness, they either ran out of people or they decided to make a step to the side a bit!” But I was very honored and very happy to have that happen.

-Eva Baker

I spent a lot of time in my Lindquist lecture on the need for experts, and those with expertise, to tell more powerful stories that will convey these issues in a manner that is more accessible to the larger public.

-Henry Braun

I don’t mean this to sound egocentric, but I was surprised and particularly pleased that I was given this honor because I did a lot of very unpopular work that focused on questions that education policy leaders really didn’t want addressed.

-Daniel M. Koretz

Equity and fairness of assessment are of utmost importance to the validity of outcomes. Lindquist’s attention to these issues encouraged more research in these areas which improved the quality of large scale assessments in the nation.

-Jamal Abedi
Call to Action

“I'm probably the only person in measurement who told students every year that if they wanted one optional reading, it should be Lindquist's 1951 chapter in *Educational Measurement*.

“One student took me up on that, read it, and sent me an email later with two bullets. The first was, ‘Why doesn’t everyone read this?’ And the second was, ‘Is there anything left for me to do?’”

-Daniel Koretz, Lindquist awardee in 2022

E.F. Lindquist understood that behind every page of penciled-in ovals was a real person, each with unique abilities and aspirations, and that understanding informs assessment to this day.

“As we looked at the list of winners for the Lindquist Award, we saw some pretty typical characteristics. Mostly men, mostly white, a few people originally from other countries, and a few women,” said Dianne Henderson, vice president for research, ACT. “It's only been really in the last 10 years that we've seen an increase in the diversity within the profession, especially at the young and mid-career level where their perspectives are being reflected in research. And they're starting to make a difference to how we think about assessment design and the use of the results.”

While students have always been unique, each contributing to the vibrant spectrum that comprises American education, the scholars of education haven't always been reflective of that same diversity.

“For each individual student, what we see in the aggregate does not necessarily hold,” said Henderson. “Because the average of everyone is nobody - it’s important to understand each individual and help unlock their potential.”
“When you look down the list of past Lindquist awardees there’s what, 10 males to every female?” noted Felice Levine. “And the number of persons of color? And with diverse gender identities? These data alone point to a dominant paradigm that is only beginning to change.”

Through ACT and AERA, that’s changing.

“When I think of building the field, I think of diversifying that community as early as possible,” said Tina Gridiron, vice president, ACT’s Center for Equity in Learning. “Lean in on making the content area – especially math – jump off the page and be exciting and welcoming and full of possibility.”

Eva Baker knows what it’s like to feel alone, isolated on an academic island.

“Because my background was in learning and instruction with a strong methodology orientation, I don’t think I was ever accepted by the measurement community,” she said. “I also think I started as an outlier maybe because there weren’t many women in that part of the world. There was Anne Anastasi [a Lindquist awardee in 1996], and very few other women.”

A generation later, change has begun.

“We’re just starting to see what difference it will make when you have more diversity in the field,” said Henderson. “We have to question our assumptions and our past practices to ensure representation in our assessments. This is uncomfortable. And we are going to have to sit in the uncomfortableness. From there we can start to understand, find empathy, and move forward to include everyone.”

Gridiron says the active engagement of current education researchers is essential to updating the demographics of the profession.

“That reaching, seeking, and supporting has begun – but it’s not always easy.

“I would say two-thirds of my graduate students were women. About half of them, at least, were from different countries or ethnic minorities in our country. That was really important to me,” said Richard Shavelson. “Are they going to reshape it? It’s not just who’s doing the research, it’s our society and its expectations and what it rewards. And right now, it’s not rewarding different perspectives.”
“In my own case, I always tried to get a group of diverse stakeholders – not as diverse as they should be – to hear this out and give me their comments so I’m not inadvertently creating a problem,” said Henry Braun. “Over the last two decades we’ve done more to reach out to diverse audiences that typically were not found in educational measurement, but we’ve got a long, long way to go.”

While the discipline has yet to reach its intended demographic destination, educational measurement’s growing diversity reflects decades of investment in that effort.

“E.F. Lindquist and his ACT co-founder, Ted McCarrel, believed the ACT test would help diversify campuses by broadening college access for student populations that were traditionally underserved in higher education,” said Janet Godwin. “At the same time, it’s important that all populations have a voice in the professions charged with supporting student success.”

“Diverse sets of experience not only bring us to a more diverse and inclusive field, but also help us to identify, specify, and clarify problems in a very different way,” said Levine. “The next generation of researchers and scholars needs to look to these Lindquist Award winners and see themselves in their shoes.”

“As we take the assessment journey, I would hope we marry it, not just to individual progress, but to community, nation, and world progress,” said Henderson, “so that it is an opportunity to introduce individuals with certain competencies and skill sets to participate in the solution building and design work that we know we need for a collective engagement around our future.”

“When we do it together, we are stronger,” said Gridiron. “The more we can bring individuals together from different perspectives into the design of our measurement arena, the stronger our assessments will be.”
# Lindquist Award Recipients

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“[E.F. Lindquist] was an unusual combination of deep interest and concern for the education of young people, a comprehensive grasp of educational and psychological theory, and an inventive genius for translating ideas into practices and instruments to assist in carrying out these practices effectively.”

-Ralph Tyler, (Lindquist awardee, 1974), Reminiscences about E.F. Lindquist, 1978

To learn more about the E.F. Lindquist award and to submit a nomination, visit [https://www.aera.net/About-AERA/Awards/E-F-Lindquist-Award](https://www.aera.net/About-AERA/Awards/E-F-Lindquist-Award).
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