



International Database Training Seminar Announcement

Using the NCES International Databases
for Research and Policy Discussion

Wednesday, May 21, through Friday, May 23, 2008
Washington, DC

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, will sponsor a 2½-day seminar on the use of NCES International Databases: the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

This seminar is open to advanced graduate students and faculty members from colleges and universities nationwide, and to researchers, education practitioners, and policy analysts from state and local education agencies and professional associations.

OVERVIEW



Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). PISA is an international assessment of 15-year-old students' performance in reading, mathematics, and science literacy. In the United States, this age corresponds largely to grade 9 and 10 students. PISA also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies such as learning strategies. PISA emphasizes skills that students have acquired as they near the end of mandatory schooling. PISA is administered every three years, with emphasis on one subject in each data collection cycle. PISA began in 2000 focusing on reading literacy. PISA focused on mathematics literacy in 2003, and science literacy in 2006. In 2009, reading literacy will be the primary focus again.

For more information about PISA, including PISA highlights, sample items and a list of available publications that can be downloaded or ordered, visit the study website (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pisa>).



Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study). TIMSS is an international assessment of student achievement in the 4th and 8th grade in mathematics and science. These data allow you to compare the achievement of U.S. students in mathematics and science to that of students in other countries. TIMSS data have been collected in 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007.

For more information about TIMSS, including sample items, publications, and products, visit the study website (<http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>).



Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

PIRLS is an international assessment of the reading literacy of young students. The PIRLS study focuses on the achievement and reading experiences of children in 35 countries in grades equivalent to 4th grade in the United States. The study includes a test of reading comprehension and a series of questionnaires focusing on the factors associated with the development of reading literacy. PIRLS was first conducted in 2001. It was conducted

again in 2006. The study is coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

For more information about PIRLS, including sample items, publications, and results, visit the study website (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>).

PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTCOME

The overall goal of the seminar is to provide researchers with opportunities to gain access to some of the most comprehensive education data resources in the nation and to use the PISA, TIMSS, and or PIRLS data in substantive research. The seminar will include both lecture and hands-on instruction. Specifically, the seminar will include the following topics and activities:

- an overview of the survey sample designs, data components, and coverage;
- discussion of methodological and technical issues relevant to data use;
- instruction and practice with PISA, TIMSS, and PIRLS data; and
- hands-on experience in conducting analyses.

It should be noted that this seminar will not provide formal instruction on advanced statistical methods and analyses.

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants shall submit a preliminary analysis plan that uses NCES international data, including a clear specification of the research questions, a rationale for the analysis, analytic approach (specifications of population, variables, statistical techniques, etc.), and preliminary analysis results, if available. When the analysis is completed and a paper or report drafted, a complimentary copy of the paper or report should be sent to NCES.

QUALIFICATIONS

Participants attending this seminar should have a solid understanding of statistical methods, be experienced in using personal computers, and be proficient in the use of SPSS or SAS statistical software packages. Participants will be expected to know how to perform basic SPSS or SAS procedures, including recoding data and running descriptive analyses (e.g., frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, means). Applicants will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- significance of the proposed research and potential benefit from participation in the seminar;
- consistency of the proposed research agenda with the data available in PIRLS, PISA, or TIMSS;
- experience in educational research; and
- knowledge and skills in statistical analyses and the use of statistical computer packages. (Please see the attached application form for specific questions pertaining to your level of experience).

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There is no fee to attend this seminar. NCES will provide training materials as well as computers for hands-on practice. NCES will also pay for transportation, hotel accommodations, and a fixed per diem for meals and incidental expenses during the training seminar.

LOCATION

The seminar will be held in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, May 21, through Friday, May 23, 2008. Accepted applicants will be sent information about both the meeting and lodging arrangements.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

If you are interested in attending the seminar, please complete and return the following documents (electronic versions are preferred):

1. The application form.
2. A copy of your resume.
3. A 1 to 2-page statement, clearly describing your research study and how the study can be furthered by your participation in the seminar.
4. A letter of recommendation from your faculty advisor if you are a graduate student.

Your proposed research study should include specifications of issues, rationale, and study approach. Space is limited for the seminar. Only complete applications will be considered, and only two applicants from the same organization or institution can be accepted.

All applications should be received no later than **April 4, 2008**. Applications will be reviewed and selected candidates will be informed by **April 14, 2008**. The selected candidates will receive the seminar agenda and information about travel arrangements.

Applications should be returned to: Gordana Vukovic
Synergy Enterprises, Inc.
8757 Georgia Avenue, Suite 450
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Email: gvukovic@sei2003.com

If you have questions regarding this seminar, please contact Gordana Vukovic through e-mail at gvukovic@sei2003.com or by telephone at (240) 485-1700, or by fax at (240) 485-1982.

NOTE: Applicants are allowed to attend no more than two NCES sponsored seminars within a 6-year period.



APPLICATION
International Database Training Seminar
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
U.S. Department of Education
May 21-23, 2008
Washington, DC

Dr. Mr. Ms.

NAME:

(please type or print clearly)

AFFILIATION:

TITLE/POSITION:

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP CODE:

TELEPHONE:

FAX:

E-MAIL:

Computer Statistical Software Experience:

All participants must have at least 2 years of SPSS or SAS experience.

Software	Level of experience			
	Extensive (= proficient in aggregating, merging, recoding, weighting, and analysis)	Some (= familiar with recoding and many analysis procedures)	Very little (= simple descriptive procedures and recoding)	None
SPSS (Windows)				
SAS (Windows)				

Please answer the following:

1. Do you have experience merging files in SPSS or SAS? yes no
2. Do you have experience recoding variable values in SPSS or SAS? yes no
3. Have you used weights in your analysis using SPSS or SAS? yes no
4. Have you run statistical analyses using SPSS or SAS? yes no

Area of Research Interest:

Please attach a clearly written description of your research interest and how that can be furthered through the use of NCES data (1–2 typewritten pages). Be as specific as possible. If you are a graduate student, a letter of recommendation from your faculty advisor must be included with your application.

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