



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Date: March 03, 2004

Dear Sir/Madam:

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, will sponsor seven advanced studies seminars on the use of NCES data. Each seminar is designed for researchers in academic communities and other research communities, e.g., federal agencies, research organizations and think tanks that are interested in quantitative studies, i.e., faculty members, advanced graduate students, and data analysts involved with educational research. Each multi-day seminar will be held in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and covers several topics, including the nature and content of the database, computer software for accessing and analyzing the data, and funding opportunities.

The primary purpose of these seminars is to demonstrate the richness of NCES databases and provide instruction on how to use the data properly and effectively. Seminar activities include lectures, illustrations, and demonstrations. The hands-on computer practice sessions will allow participants to conduct analyses with their selected databases. Applicants should have knowledge of statistics and be proficient in the use of SAS or SPSS statistical software packages.

The seven seminars and their application due dates are as follows:

Seminar	Application Due Date Complete application package must be received by this date	Seminar Date	Contact
• <i>ED Finance</i>	April 16, 2004	May 24—26, 2004	Christine Forest
• <i>NELS: 88/ELS: 2002</i>	April 23, 2004	May 26—28, 2004	Joy Butler
• <i>PIRLS</i>	June 7, 2004	June 28—30, 2004	Joy Butler
• <i>ECLS-K</i>	June 4, 2004	July 6—9, 2004	Christine Forest
• <i>NHES</i>	June 23, 2004	July 14—16, 2004	Joy Butler
• <i>NAEP</i>	June 18, 2004	July 20—23, 2004	Christine Forest
• <i>SASS</i>	July 14, 2004	August 4—6, 2004	Joy Butler

Attached are the seminar announcements and the application forms. We would appreciate your assistance in distributing the enclosed information as soon as possible to appropriate persons at your institution. These announcements are also posted on the NCES Web Site (<http://www.nces.ed.gov/conferences/>). If you have any questions regarding these seminars, please contact Joy Butler by telephone at (703) 807-2315, e-mail, joyb@smdi.com, or Christine Forest by telephone (703) 516-8873, email, christinef@smdi.com.

Sincerely,

Robert Lerner, Ph.D.
Commissioner

Beverly E. Coleman, Ph.D.
Data User Training Director



PIRLS Database Training Seminar Announcement

**Using the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS)
Database for Research and Policy Discussion**

**Monday, June 28, through Wednesday, June 30, 2004
Washington, DC**

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, will sponsor a 3-day advanced studies seminar on the use of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2001 database for education research and policy analysis. The PIRLS 2001 study focuses on the achievement and reading experiences of children in 35 countries in the upper of the two grades with the most 9-year-olds (fourth grade in most countries including the United States). The study includes a written test of reading comprehension and a series of questionnaires focusing on the factors associated with the development of reading literacy.

This seminar is aimed at faculty and advanced graduate students from colleges and universities. Education researchers and policy analysts with strong statistical skills from state and local education agencies and professional associations are also welcome.

PROGRESS IN INTERNATIONAL READING LITERACY STUDY (PIRLS)

PIRLS

Progress in International
Reading Literacy Study

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study is a large international comparative study of the reading literacy of young students. Reading literacy is one of the most important abilities students acquire as they progress through their early school years. It is the foundation for learning across all subjects, it can be used for recreation and for personal growth, and it equips young children with the ability to participate fully in their communities and the larger society.

PIRLS focuses on three aspects of reading literacy: processes of comprehension; purposes for reading; and reading behaviors and attitudes. For more information about PIRLS 2001, please review the materials posted on the NCES web site (<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/>).

PURPOSE

The goal of the seminar is to provide education data analysts and researchers with an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of PIRLS 2001 and hands-on experience accessing and analyzing a database with information that can be used to improve reading instruction and learning. PIRLS also allows countries to compare the performance of their young children with those in other countries. Specifically, this seminar has three aims:

- To stimulate interest in using PIRLS 2001 data to address current and future education research questions;
- To enhance participants' understanding of the methodological and technical issues that must be addressed when working with PIRLS 2001 data; and
- To provide instruction and hands-on experience in conducting statistical analyses on PIRLS 2001 data.

The 3-day seminar will include the following topics and activities:

- An overview of PIRLS 2001 design and database contents;
- Methodological and technical issues that must be taken into account when analyzing PIRLS 2001 data; and

Participants attending this seminar should have a solid understanding of basic statistics including procedures required for analyzing survey data (i.e., data collected from multi-stage probability samples as opposed to simple random samples), have some familiarity with measurement theory, and be experienced in the use of personal computers. They also should be proficient in the use of the SPSS or SAS statistical software package.

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 2001;
- Experience in educational research; and
- Knowledge and skills in statistical analyses or the use of statistical computer packages. (Please see the attached application form for specific questions pertaining to your level of experience.)

EXPECTED OUTCOME

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants shall submit a summary of a preliminary study design that uses PIRLS 2001 data, including a clear specification of study issues, rationale for the study, study approach (specifications of population, variables, etc.), and preliminary analysis results if available. When the study is finished, a copy of the paper or report should be sent to NCES.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE SEMINAR

There is no fee to attend this seminar. NCES will provide training materials as well as computers for the 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, Monday, June 28, 2004, through Wednesday, June 30, 2004. This year the seminar will be held at The Academy for Educational Development located at 1825 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC. Accepted applicants will be sent information about both the meeting and lodging arrangements.

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

If you are interested in attending the seminar, please complete and return the following documents:

1. The application form.
2. A copy of your resume, highlighting your experience with statistical analysis.
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 completed applications will be considered, and only two applicants from the same organization or institution can be accepted.

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

APPLICATION DEADLINE

All applications should be received no later than **June 7, 2004**. Applications will be reviewed and selected candidates will be informed by **June 14, 2004**. Selected candidates will receive the seminar agenda and information about travel arrangements.

Applications should be returned to: Joy Butler
Synectics for Management Decisions, Inc.
1901 N. Moore Street, Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22209

Contact Joy Butler through e-mail joyb@smdi.com, by telephone (703) 807-2315, or by fax (703) 528-2857, if you have any questions regarding this seminar.