

Melissa L. Gholson

Education

2015 Ed.D., Educational Leadership, Ohio University, Athens, OH

1992 MA, Special Education, Marshall University

1990 BA Marshall University, Huntington, WV
Major: Elementary and Early Childhood Education
Minor: Special Education

Certifications & Licenses: Early Childhood PK-K, Elementary Education Multi-Subjects K-8, Mental Impairments (Mild, Moderate, Severe, Profound), Specific Learning Disabilities, Autism, Emotional and Behavior Disorders, Principal, Supervision of Curriculum & Instruction and Superintendent

Experience

2023-Present

Research Project Director

Research and Psychometrics

Accessible Teaching, Learning & Assessment Systems Center

Achievement & Assessment Institute

University of Kansas, Lawrence KS

Support research and psychometrics for operational assessments for general and alternate assessments. Lead assessment and research design activities for the alternate interim suites and K-2 Pathways assessment projects. Lead universal assessment design activities and the centers postsecondary educational opportunities project.

2018-2023

Research Scientist

Research and Measurement Sciences

Educational Testing Service, Princeton, NJ

Supported assessment programs and partners to advance quality and equity in education and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. PI for the California Alternate ELPAC (English Language Proficiency Assessments for California) and PI on the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) SAIL project and Co-PI on the Special Olympics International program evaluation. These projects represent multi-year efforts with internal and external clients. Supported operational alternate assessment (content and ELP) for multi-state contracts, and various research studies. Provided consultation to clients for large scale contracts for state K-12 assessments consulting on design, development, and research. Attended the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and client meetings to support all of the state assessment programs, coordinated with ETS Psychometrics and Research (PAR) for ELPAC & CAASPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). This included technical advising and support for presentations, review of research proposals, scope of work and budget. Advised across ETS FCEs, Client partners (Sacramento County Office of Education and Cambium). All

projects were completed on time and under budget. Coordinated documentation for technical requirements and oversaw submissions and responses to the U.S. Department of Education peer review. Conducted accommodations research for external clients and led the investigations for grant proposals. Conducted logic model training and support for ETS internal and external projects and partners. Mentored ETS staff and interns on alternate assessments, theories of action, evidence centered design and research methods. A description of multi-year efforts on major projects is provided.

Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment

Led and coordinated the design of the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (Alternate ELPAC) and conducted subsequent research and validation studies (2018-2022). Developed an *Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessments (AELPA) theory of action* that formed the foundation for the subsequent design efforts. She was invited to present her work and jointly collaborate with states for a CCSSO joint session of Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) and English Learners (EL) SCASS (State Collaborative on Assessment and Students Standards) meeting. The AELPA Theory of Action has been presented at state and national conferences.

The Alternate ELPAC test design for K-12 English learner with the most significant cognitive disabilities was developed using evidence-centered design (ECD) and allowed for a planned approach to collect evidence for validity. The validation efforts followed the alternate assessment validity framework by Marion and Pellegrino (2006) which categorizes sources of evidence for test content, response processes, internal structure, and relations to other variables. However, the framework was adapted to address linguistic processes which is required for English language proficiency assessments. The need for evidence of linguistic and language processes are a new critical element technical requirement of peer review since ESSA. The evidence was collected during each phase of task type and item design and development. Alternate ELPAC test design process included a systematic approach to collecting and synthesis of validity evidence to establish the technical adequacy of the assessment.

Led the coordination of the Alternate ELPAC design process for the California Department of Education (CDE) and in collaboration and support from a range of interest holders, including: a panel of nationally recognized experts convened specifically to support this assessment design effort, the Alternate ELPAC Test Design Advisory Team (TDAT); the CDE's statewide assessment Technical Advisory Committee (TAC); panels of California educators of ELSCDs (English learners with significant cognitive disabilities), SSCDs (students with significant cognitive disabilities), and English learners; a range of educational advocacy groups including Californians Together; and, last but most importantly, California K-12 ELSCDs themselves. The frequent inclusion of these interest holders at various stages of the test design and development process was not only a means of establishing the appropriateness of the test, but also a key element of the ECD process.

Designed and led the research studies and validation approach to support the claims and collect sources of evidence for the interpretive argument. Before this effort, little research existed about the test takers' characteristics for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. Initially the defining the test taking population was complicated since an alternate English proficiency assessment was a new requirement the state longitudinal data system had no established mechanisms to identify test takers eligible for the assessment. Led efforts to define the target

population by examining the existing state longitudinal data and identifying key information needed to identify eligible students for this assessment. Designed a student background information questionnaire (*BIQ*) survey to collect relevant demographic information and student characteristics (e.g., home language, range of communication modes, recent arrival status, primary disability, ELP rating) (Educational Testing Service, 2020a, p. 23). The survey collected information about individual student characteristics not included in the existing data system (e.g., range of primary communication modes, educator ratings of English language proficiency, educator ratings of knowledge skills and abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing). The purpose of the survey was to identify key characteristics of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities and the range of their knowledge skills and abilities to inform the test design. The survey was used to support test design, describe the target population, and support validation.

The survey was administered across eight districts with a diverse range of languages and demographics in districts in northern, central, and southern California which resulted in identification of 144 students eligible for pilot participation. Additionally, the information from the survey was used to select pilot study participants as identified by key characteristics of ELs (English Learners) with significant cognitive disabilities. A purposeful sampling plan using a maximum variation approach was used to deliberately include the full range of ELs with significant cognitive disabilities across kindergarten through grade twelve. The sample was stratified at each grade and grade band to include a representative sample of the test takers based on the characteristics identified from the BIQ survey findings. The identification and selection of study participants for each grade and grade band were selected on maximizing the range of characteristics of students with diverse home languages across a variety of primary disabilities, a representation of the full range of communication modes, a range of English language ability ratings (e.g., the general English performance level definitions- low, medium, or high), and special education settings for inclusion criteria. Chi-square analyses and associated effect size measures detected no significant association between teacher-reported English language ability ratings on the pilot study participation relative to the full survey pool ($p = .08$; Cramer's $V = .21$ and considered moderate). A similar analysis detected no significant association between communication mode (verbal vs. non-verbal) and study participation relative to the full survey pool ($p = .08$; Goodman and Kruskal Tau = $.02$). Therefore, we were able to generalize that the pilot study participants' characteristics were similar to that of the overall survey pool. Methods and strategies for the sampling methods for heterogeneous test taking populations used for this study have been shared at national conferences.

Designed and led the *Alternate ELPAC Pilot Utilizing Cognitive Laboratory Methodology Study*. Cognitive laboratory methodology has been recognized as an effective tool for the development of assessments for diverse populations and provides richly detailed evidence obtained through structured interview and observation techniques that can be used to support validity evidence and inform the design and development of the Alternate ELPAC. Developed, trained, and led three research teams to conduct observations at multi-site locations across California over a thirteen-day window. She designed each research teams to have one member with experience on students with disabilities or alternate assessment and a second team member with English learner expertise. Teams were trained to observe either the test examiner or the student using semi-structured protocols and both open and closed coding. After each observation researchers reconciled their experiences as field notes.

I designed the test administration guide so that educators could respond and record any responses to each item or task to specific research questions using closed coding embedded into the *Directions for Administration*. After each observation, one team member would conduct the interview while the other team member recorded responses. Data entry was collected on hard-copy protocols and entered online at the end of each day in the field. The piloting of the items collected evidence from the test examiner who solicited response processes from students and collected evidence of whether the test examiner rated that the task types elicited the appropriate knowledge and skills reflected for the six test forms. The piloting also required careful coordination with supporting staff from the Sacramento County Office of Education across eight districts in twenty-three schools. Led the careful coordination and scheduling which was critical to both the timeline and the budget. The findings of the study were presented to the California client and to the State Board of Education and led to the revision of the blueprint, task types, and accessibility. The findings were disseminated at conferences.

Designed an *In-Test Survey* to collect additional validity evidence for the operational test by collecting information from educators' ratings of individual students' knowledge skills and abilities (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), communication modes, and levels of English language proficiency ratings. Collaborated with ETS PAR (Psychometric Analysis & Research) to summarize the data, develop data visualizations, and presented findings to client and TAG (Technical Advisory Group). The results of this survey provided additional variables to interpret actual test results for each grade or grade band. We compared obtained English proficiency scores of individual students to educator ratings of ELP and skills and found a high level of consistency of ratings except for grades k and 1. The academic skills were put into categories by level of English language proficiency as evidence to support what students know and can do for each grade and grade-band across three levels of proficiency. The study found patterns of relationships were predictable. The results can be used for educators to identify characteristics of skills related to each level of English language proficiency. An educator brief was created to support classification and reclassification decisions. The survey results may be used as a mechanism for monitoring overall changes as the system matures and for validity evidence. When the study findings were presented during a TAG meeting, Dr. Martha Thurlow, a member of the TAG commented the study was "excellent" and that "nothing like this level of validation work has been done for this population or for most special populations assessments in general." The study results were disseminated at the California Educational Research Association conference and to LEAs for dissemination to their educators.

Reimagining Fairness: NAEP Accessibility Explorations was a project funded by NCES (National Center for Education Statistics). Co-PI with Danielle Guzman-Orth. The study was an exploration of accessibility tools used on the NAEP mathematics assessment. In FY22/23, we explored accessibility tool use and made inferences about the cognitive demands that arise from using the tools (e.g., task switching) as our interpretative lens. Focusing on grades four and eight, we examined survey question responses, available item metadata, item level responses, overall performance scores, and process data related to accessibility tool use to make inferences about students' test taking processes and cognitive load related to accessibility tool use. Specifically, this investigation examines mathematics process data to examine text to speech use and the bilingual toggle feature for language type (English, Spanish). We used performance data and analyses of timing and click data to investigate the impact of text to speech on performance. Specifically, we examined the timing and click data to demonstrate that all users spent additional time per test item regardless of group when text to speech was used. Accessibility tool usage

may vary across specific tools, task types, content, grades, and individual student characteristics. This investigation sought to make inferences by examining potential performance costs associated with accessibility tool use. Study findings were shared with the NAEP client and support the new platform design and policy considerations for extended time.

Special Olympics International (SOI)

Co-PI for an externally funded multi-year project program evaluation related to improving outcomes for students with intellectual disabilities. SOI Unified Champion Schools Social and Emotional Learning Program Evaluation seeks to strengthen SOI's understanding of the impact SEL (Social Emotional Learning) focused Unified Sports programming has on students with and without intellectual disabilities (IDs), and to support expansion of SEL-focused programming to Unified Club activities. This project may advance the field's knowledge given the paucity of rigorous, detailed evaluation research on inclusive methods of fostering SEL competencies among students with disabilities.

Socioculturally Responsive Assessment Project: Beyond DIF (Differential Item Functioning)

Joseph Martineau & Melissa Gholson led an exploration on methodological approaches to support evidence model validation for sociocultural culturally responsive assessments. This exploration combined parametric and nonparametric approaches to explore models of differential item functioning (DIF) as an intersectional phenomenon. This data exploration found the importance of additive and multiplicative DIF effects and confounded DIF grouping variables. DIF effects were mostly additive and large DIF effects were found for multivariable intersectional groups, even when single-group analyses found no significant DIF. This exploration challenges measurement experts to consider more nuanced intersectional approaches for item bias beyond traditional Mantel-Haenszel approaches. We proposed to broaden and apply these theories and models toward the goals of minimizing item bias and approaches to improve test development processes and evidence of fairness for large-scale assessments. Dissemination of the findings were presented at NCME 2022.

2017-2018

Researcher

Wisconsin Center for Education Research
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

Led research on the Alternate English Language Learning Assessment (ALTELLA) project. The project examined instructional practices and policies for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities to support the development of a future theory of action to support assessment development. I designed the survey to identify student characteristics, as well as protocols for teacher observations and interviews to examine instructional support and professional development needs. Other activities included a standards prioritization process and development of item template recommendations and RFP template designs. Other activities supported included the WIDA accessibility processes, item reviews and I made recommendations for future assessment improvements. Consulted on the research and provided technical assistance on issues of equity, fairness, validity and advocacy for special populations on the general ACCESS.

2009-2017

State Assessment Coordinator

Office of Assessment, Accountability and Research

West Virginia Department of Education, Charleston, WV
Charleston, WV

Led the development, coordinated, and monitored federally mandated state assessments including large scale summative content assessments, including alternate and general and language proficiency assessments. Coordinated the implementation and monitoring of federal requirements and programs, for special education, Title I and Title III and policy development to support required mandates. Collaborated, coordinated, and led a variety of state and national assessment activities, including standards development; standards setting; alignment studies for general assessment and linkage studies for alternate assessments; scoring sessions, item writing, test administration, bias, sensitivity and accessibility training and reviews, manuals and policy development, development and implementation of the state accommodations monitoring process. Lead assessment data manager including transfers, coding, and programming for the operation of state assessment system. Managed accessibility and accommodations for English language learners and students with disabilities in the areas of accessibility for all state assessments, and development of assessment policies and guidance documents. Conducted item review for accessibility, language, and content for all test development. Developed and led the state monitoring system for accommodations. Conducted research on state assessment accommodations and provided technical assistance and professional development for special populations (Els and students with disabilities).

Developed and reviewed RFPs, submitted grant applications, managed awards and budgets, state lead on the Improving Instruction for English Learners Through Improved Accessibility Decisions project funded by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) at the U.S. Department of Education to develop professional development modules on accessibility and accommodations decision making for instruction and assessment for English learners. Lead and contributed to two other Enhanced Assessment Grants (EAG) s, DIAMOND and ALTELLA Projects. Supported local education agencies (LEA) by providing policy guidance and targeted technical assistance and professional developments to district administrators and teachers, in areas of test administration, curriculum, instruction, assessment, English proficiency and special education.

Participated as a lead Peer Reviewer for the USDE accountability system. Served on the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) as a member of the Accessibility and Accommodations workgroup; the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) 21 Assessment Consortium as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) member; and state lead coordinator for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment consortium. Provided training for Smarter Balance Mathematics Performance Task Item Writing on “Accessibility, Bias & Sensitivity.” Invited CCSSO speaker on accessibility and English Language Learners with Disabilities and special education. Invited speaker for State School Psychologists annual meeting. Led accommodations research and data analysis for program improvement for special subgroup populations, including data analysis and program evaluation for the National Center for Educational Outcomes. Submitted state evidence as part of the last ESEA federal peer review. Reviewed U.S. Department of Education Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA & ESSA) mandates including Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) policy requirements for state assessment systems, including implications for students with disabilities and English language learners.

2004-2009

Supervisor of Federal Programs

Cabell County Schools, Huntington, WV

Designed and administered programming for students with disabilities and ensured federal and state policies were implemented, including reviewing policies for students with disabilities, and planning and monitoring the budget for federal programs. Hired, staffed, and supervised at fifteen separate locations for students with low incidence disabilities, communication disorders, vision and hearing impairments, deaf-blind project, preschool handicapped. Provided staff development for all areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and legal issues supporting best practices in accordance with state and federal policies. Led district contact for legal arbitration, due process, and Office of Civil Rights complaints. Coordinated county assessments for students with disabilities and assured accommodations, led the alternate assessment and developed an alternate curriculum to be used with the state extended alternate achievement standards, monitored schools and programs in both general and special education, participated in the development of the state alternate assessment, and provided support to building administrators to assure compliance for federal and special education indicators.

2004-2005

Principal

Dawson-Bryant High School

Coal Grove, Ohio

Developed master schedule, created rosters, led the monitoring of federal programs, and chaired 504 and IEP and manifestation meetings. Observed classrooms and supported teacher evaluation.

2002-2005

Assistant Professor

Department of Educational Studies

Ohio University, Athens, OH

Athens, OH

Editor of Rural Mathematics Educator, Instructor of record for graduate and undergraduate courses in *Diagnostic assessment, Research and Evaluation, Program Evaluation, Secondary Science Instructional Methods, Educational Foundations, Elementary Education Field Experience, and Advanced Methods of Teaching*. Coordinated and supervised student teaching experiences in Ohio and West Virginia for both general education and special education programs. Experience in all levels of instruction from early learning and pre-school to postsecondary level. Education research assistant conducted literature reviews and policy analysis. Editor for online journal for the Appalachian Collaborative Center for Learning Assessment and Instruction in Mathematics (ACCLAIM) Project, organized layout, edited and evaluated submissions, wrote editorials, researched literature and trends.

1992-1999

Assistant Professor

College of Education

Marshall University, Huntington, WV

Instructor of educational foundations, elementary education, and advanced methods of teaching. Coordinated and supervised student teaching experiences. Led the collaboration of service-learning projects to connect the research to educational communities of practice. Supervision of

pre-service teachers, mentoring of graduate students, and in-service professional development for teachers. Course titles were *Educational Foundations*, *Mental Impairment*, *Philosophy of Education*, and *Educational Methods*. Assisted with development of the teacher education program revision at Marshall University outlined in the initiation of the capstone experience and “Schools and Society” course which is a graduation requirement for all future educators.

1990-2004

Special Education Teacher

Mingo County Schools, Williamson, WV

Special education teacher, special Olympics district coach and district evaluator. Provided district-wide training in assessment, curriculum planning, prescriptive and remediation techniques, behavioral management, collaboration, technological applications, and research methods. Received a commendation from the WVDE for designing and implementing three innovative programs for at-risk students, district at-risk coordinator, created state and county curriculum in areas of science, conducted grant writing, fund-raising in excess of a million dollars. Director of Energy Express a summer reading and nutrition program for low-income students. Program evaluation of a reading program for Marshall University.

Selected Publications

- Wylie E.C. & **Gholson, M.L.** (2023). U.S. Federal Assessment Policy Reforms in the Twenty First Century and their Impacts. *The International Encyclopedia of Education, 4th Edition*. ScienceDirect, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/referencework/9780128186299/international-encyclopedia-of-education>
- Buzick, H., Casabianca-Marshall & **Gholson, M.** (2023). Personalizing large-scale assessment in practice. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/emip.1255>
- Walker, M., Olivera-Aguilar, M., Laitusis, C., Lehman, B., Guzman-Orth, D. & **Gholson, M.** (2023) Culturally responsive assessment: Provisional principles. ETS Research Report. (Pending).
- Gholson, M.**, Sova, L. Hauck, M. & Albee, T. (2023) Extending principles of evidence centered design in developing assessments for diverse populations. *Educational Assessment*. (Submitted).
- Gholson, M.** Steinberg, J. & Albee, T. (2023). Mixed methods for improving validity for research on special populations. (In preparation).
- Educational Testing Service. (2020). *Final report for the alternate English language proficiency assessments for California pilot using cognitive lab methodology study*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education [**PI: Gholson, M.**]. Located at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/infomemoddec2020.asp>
- Gholson, M. L.**, & Guzman-Orth, D. (2019). Developing an alternate English language proficiency assessment (AELPA) system: A theory of action (Research Report No. RR-19-25). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ets2.12262>
- Saal, L. K., **Gholson, M.**, Machtmes, K., & Machtmes, R. (2018). Associations between adults' numeracy skills and employment status: An analysis of PIAAC's U.S. dataset. Retrieved [2018, November] from PIAAC Gateway website:

- [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/51bb74b8e4b0139570ddf020/t/5be486bcf950b74caa092c42/1541703356167/2018_Saal_Gholson_Machtmes_Machtmes_Numeracy_EmploymentStatus.pdf]. Washington, DC.
- Michaels, H. R., **Gholson, M. L.**, & Sheinker, J. (2018, September). *ALTELLA standards prioritization process evaluation*. Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization. Retrieved from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education research, Alternate English Language Learning Assessment Project: <http://altella.wceruw.org/resources.html>
- Shyyan, V. V., **Gholson, M. L.**, & Christensen, L. L. (2018, June). *Considerations for educators serving English learners with significant cognitive disabilities* (ALTELLA Brief No. 2). Retrieved from University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Alternate English Language Learning Assessment project: <http://altella.wceruw.org/resources.html>
- Christensen, L. L., **Gholson, M. L.**, & Shyyan, V. V. (2018, April). *Establishing a definition of English learners with significant cognitive disabilities* (ALTELLA Brief No. 1). Retrieved from University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, Alternate English Language Learning Assessment project: <http://altella.wceruw.org/resources.html>
- Saal, L. **Gholson, M.**, & Alharbi, F. (2018). *A dream deferred? Equity, employment, & adults' literacy skills*. A paper presented which received the Early Career award at AERA Conference, New York, NY.
- Gholson, M.** (2016). *Measuring principals' attitudes toward poverty*. A paper presented at the Articulations of Higher Education across the Globe. World Education Research Association (WERA), Baltimore, MD.
- Gholson, M.** (2016, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012). *West Virginia guidelines for participation in state assessments: Guidance on accommodations for students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency in state and district-wide testing*. Charleston: West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Assessment, Research and Accountability.
- Gholson, M.** (2015). *Rural principal's attitudes toward poverty and the poor*. Doctoral dissertation, Ohio University.
https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=ohiou1448893928&disposition=inline

Client Reports

- Educational Testing Service. (2019a). Alternate ELPAC task type specifications. Sacramento, CA: Educational Testing Service.
- Educational Testing Service. (2019b). California English Language Development Connectors for the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessments for California. Sacramento, CA: Educational Testing Service.
- Educational Testing Service. (2022). Alternate ELPAC Survey results: An Interpretive Report for Educators.
- Educational Testing Service. (2019c). English Language Proficiency Assessments for California accessibility resources for operational testing. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education.
- Educational Testing Service. (2019d). Proposed high-level test design for the Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessments for California. Sacramento, CA:

California Department of Education. Retrieved from
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ep/documents/proposedhltaldaltelpac.pdf>.

Selected Presentations

- Gholson, M.,** Howley, L., & Albee, T. (2022). *Research to improve educational outcomes: The Alternate ELPAC survey results*. Annual meeting of the California Educational Research Association (CERA), Anaheim, CA.
- Gholson, M.** (2022). *Conceptualizations of fairness: An examination of assessment design*. In Broken systems of assessment: Addressing fairness and equity challenges in special populations. [Invited speaker] Annual Meeting of National Council of Measurement in Education (NCME), April 23, 2022.
- Gholson, M.** (2022). *Reimagining accommodations. A review of the literature and future considerations for text to speech*. [Paper presentation] Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 25, 2022.
- Gholson, M.** (2022). *Reimagining fairness: Designing equitable educational assessments*. National Council for Measurement in Education, April 9, 2022.
- Gholson, M.,** Karvonen, M. Bacher, K. Winter, P., Sato, E. & Marion, S. (2021). *Advances in validity evidence for alternate assessments*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2021 National Conference on Student Assessment, June 22, 2021.
- Davidson, A., **Gholson, M.,** Guzman-Orth, D., David, K., & Sato, E. (2021). *What's a fair test? Past, present, and future of fair and equitable state assessments*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2021 National Conference on Student Assessment, June 21, 2021.
- Gholson, M.,** Steinberg, J., & Albee, T. (2021). *Methods for improving validity for cognitive labs using purposeful sampling procedures*. National Council for Measurement in Education, June 9, 2021.
- Gholson, M.,** Sova, L., Bacher, K., & Howley, L. (2020). *Role of the pilot study using cognitive labs methodology in the design of the alternate ELPAC*. Presented at the California Educational Research Association, Virtual, November 17, 2020.
- Gholson, M.,** Davidson, A., Karvonen, M. & Spitz, D. (2020). *Fifty Years of Fairness: Reflections on Past, Present and Future Directions for Supporting Fair and Equitable State Assessments*. Accepted for the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2020 National Conference on Student Assessment, Denver, CO. June 15, 2020.
- Michaels, H., **Gholson, M.,** & Sato, E. (2020). *Scaffolding complex activities to strengthen the validity of next generation assessments*. Presented at the Association of Test Publishers Annual Conference, Virtual, September 14, 2020.
- Gholson, M.** (2020). *Improving fairness: Theories of action and intentional design methods*. Presented at the National Council for Measurement in Education 2020 Conference, Virtual, September 10, 2020.
- Gholson, M.** (2020). *Beyond Accommodations: Intentional Design Methods for Improving Validity When Assessing Diverse Populations*. Accepted for National Council for Measurement in Education, San Francisco, CA April 19, 2020-delayed and presented September 9.
- Gholson, M.,** Michaels, H., & Sireci, S. (2019). *Supporting validity evidence and technical analysis for maintaining a fair and comprehensive state assessment system*. Presented at

- the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2019 National Conference on Student Assessment, Orlando, FL. June 24.
- Karvonen, M., **Gholson, M.**, Clark, A., & Wiegert, S. (2019). *Measuring college and career readiness: How do we know if our alternate academic achievement standards are challenging and aligned?* Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2019 National Conference on Student Assessment, Orlando, FL. June 26.
- Gholson, M.**, Saal, L., & Hertz, K. (2019). *Unmasking barriers to adult employment: WIOA, PIAAC Numeracy Skills, and Implications for the Field.* A paper presented at the annual conference of the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) April 1, 2019.
- Gholson, M.**, & Saal, L. K. (2018). *Associations between adults' numeracy skills and employment status: An analysis of PIAAC's U.S. dataset.* Do U.S. adults have the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century? 2018 AIR PIAAC research to practice conference, Arlington, VA, December 6, 2018.
- Gholson, M.**, & Lyon, C. (2018). *A logic model: Informing a theory of action for alternate English language proficiency assessments.* Presented at the CCSSO Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment and Students Standards (SCASS) Fall Meeting, Boston, MA, October 9, 2018.
- Gholson, M.**, Christensen, L., Ho, M., Johnston, M., Guzman-Ort, D. (2018). *Accessibility and English Language Proficiency Assessments: Where Are We Now and What's Next?* National Conference on Student Assessment, San Diego, CA June 27, 2018.
- Clark, A., **Gholson, M.**, Christmas, J., Winter, P. and Christensen, L. (2018). *What Do We Know About Student with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Who Are English Learners?* National Conference on Student Assessment, San Diego, CA, June 28, 2018.
- Gholson, M.**, Karvonen, M., Michaels, H. Montez-Lindner, T. and Wiegert, S. (2018). *Meeting ESSA Regulation Requirements and Supporting Students on Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessments.* 2018 National Conference on Student Assessment, San Diego, CA, June 27, 2018.
- Saal, L.K. & **Gholson, M.** (2018). *A Dream Deferred? Equity, Employment, & Adults' Literacy Skills: An Analysis of the U.S. PIAAC Dataset.* A paper presented at the 2018 AERA Adult Literacy & Education SIG, New York, NY., April.
- Gholson, M.** (2018). *Instructional strategies/Considerations for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities.* Presented at the CCSSO ASES SCASS Winter Meeting, Miami, FL., February 21, 2018.
- Gholson, M.** (2018). *English learners with significant cognitive disabilities: Observations and interviews.* CCSSO Students with Disabilities Advisory Task Force Meeting, January 31 Dallas, TX.
- Warren, S., Thurlow, M., Lazarus, S. Laitusis, C. Ramsdell, P and **Gholson, M.** (2017). *Text Readers for Everyone on All Tests – Getting a Handle on What This Means.* Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2017 National Conference on Student Assessment, Austin, TX.
- Nash, B., **Gholson, M.**, Bates, S., & Bechard, S. (2017). *Impact of multidimensionality of new science standards on student performance and alternate assessment development.* Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2017 National Conference on Student Assessment, Austin, TX.
- Phillips, W., **Gholson, M.**, & Cook, G. (2017). *The confidentiality of student data in the electronic world and data sharing with consortia and research institutions.* Presented at

- the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2017 National Conference on Student Assessment, Austin, TX.
- Scott, L., **Gholson, M.**, Shyyan, V., Christensen, L., Fedorchak, G., & Davidson, A. (2017). *Accessibility, accommodations, and assessment: Innovation, strategies, data systems and research*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2017 National Conference on Student Assessment, Austin, TX.
- Gholson, M.** (2016). *Closing the Accessibility Gap: Making Data-Informed Decisions for All Students*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2016 National Conference on Student Assessment, Philadelphia, PA.
- Warren, S., Thurlow, M., Lazarus, S. Laitusis, C. Ramsdell, P., & **Gholson, M.** (2017). *Text readers for everyone on all tests – Getting a handle on what this means*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2017 National Conference on Student Assessment, Austin, TX.
- Gholson, M.**, Paul, J., Bowman, T., Christensen, L., & Laitusis, C. (2016). *Delivery of testing accessibility tools and accommodations across three testing platforms: Implementation, success, and lessons learned*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2016 National Conference on Student Assessment, Philadelphia, PA.
- Karvonen, M., **Gholson, M.**, Burton, K. Matthews, D., and Mayer, T. (2016). Actionable Alternate Assessment Score Reports: Supporting Instruction and High Expectations for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities. 2016 National Conference on Student Assessment, Philadelphia, PA.
- Gholson, M.** (2016). Measuring principals' attitudes toward poverty. Presented at the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C. in the Articulations of Higher Education Across the Globe for the World Education Research Association (WERA).
- Gholson, M.** (2015). *Assessment policies, practice, and results*. Presented at the meeting of West Virginia School Psychologist Association, Glade Springs, WV.
- Gholson, M.** (2015). *Considerations of bias, sensitivity, and accessibility for Smarter Balanced mathematics performance task writing*. Boston, MA.
- Gholson, M.** (2015). *Pre-session: Implementing accessibility frameworks for all students*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2015 National Conference on Student Assessment, San Diego, CA.
- Gholson, M.**, Christensen, L., Laitusis, C., Paul, J., Ahumada, A. & Bowman, T. (2015). *Implementing accessibility and accommodations in new assessment systems*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2015 National Conference on Student Assessment, San Diego, CA.
- Gholson, M.**, Lazarus, S., Karvonen, M., Hall, S. & Wheeler, T. (2015). *Test security policies and procedures for alternate assessments*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2015 National Conference on Student Assessment, San Diego, CA.
- Gholson, M.** (2014). *Considering accommodations in state assessments: 2013–2014 and beyond*. Presented at the Successfully Transitioning Away from the 2% Assessment Meeting, hosted by U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Educational and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) with the National Center of Educational Outcomes (NCEO) and the Regional Resource Center Program (RRCP), February 11-12, Atlanta, GA. Available at <http://nceo.info/Assessments/aa-mas/AAMAStransition#presentations>.

- Gholson, M.,** Sheinker, J. Christensen, L. & Touchette, B. (2014). *Beyond the PNP: Designing a comprehensive state system for systematically monitoring accommodations*. Presented at the CCSSO 2014 National Conference on Student Assessment. New Orleans, LA.
- Gholson, M.,** Karvonen, M., Hall, S., Williams, L. Weigert, S. & Wheeler, T. (2014). *Policies and practices in support of the transition to Next Generation alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2014 National Conference on Student Assessment, New Orleans, LA.
- Gholson, M.** (2013, June). *Forum on addressing performance gaps of low performing students: implications for assessment and instruction. Using a data perspective to address equity*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2013 National Conference on Student Assessment, National Harbor, MD.
- Gholson, M.** (2013, June). *Accommodating students on statewide assessments for the National Center Educational Outcomes (NCEO)*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2013 National Conference on Student Assessment, National Harbor, MD.
- Gholson, M.,** Sheinker, A., Weigert, S., Whetstone, P., & Faasumalie, E. (2013, June). *Embracing the new, transforming the old*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2013 National Conference on Student Assessment, National Harbor, MD.
- Gholson, M.,** Shyyan, V. and Christensen, L. (2013, June). *Accommodations for English Language Learner's with disabilities*. Presented at the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2013 National Conference on Student Assessment. National Harbor, MD.
- Gholson, M.** (2011). *Dynamic Learning Maps: Implementing Change*. Special Education Leadership Conference, Roanoke, WV.
- Gholson, M. & Wilner, L.** (2010, May). *LEP assessment: Ensuring LEP students receive appropriate accommodation support*. Presented at the WV Title III Director's Meeting, Charleston, WV.
- Gholson, M.** (2009). *Data analysis of state assessments*. Pleasants County, WV
- Gholson, M.** (2009, 2012). *Curriculum, instruction, and assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities*. Regional Educational Service Agencies. Charleston, WV
- Gholson, M. & Howley, A.** (2005, April). *High poverty/high achieving schools. We may be small, but we are mighty*. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association 2005 Rural Education Annual Meeting, Montréal, Québec, Canada
- Gholson, M.** (2004) *Program Evaluation of District Continuous Improvement Plan*. Ohio Department of Education.
- Gholson, M. & Howley, A.** (2004, April). *How Talented rural students experience school mathematics*. Paper presented at American Educational Research Association 2004 Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA
- Howley, C., **Gholson, M.,** Long, V., Adams, B., Davis, L. (2003). *Rural place-based mathematics education and social justice*. Paper presented at the National Rural Educational Association Annual Meeting, Research Forum: Kearney, NE.

Research Honors and Awards

2022 ETS Presidential Award for leading the design and development of the CA Alternate ELPAC

2020 ETS SPOT Award for the CA Alternate ELPAC Pilot Cognitive Laboratory for completing the project on time and under budget.

2019 Invited Researcher to the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) for the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC): *Associations between adults' numeracy skills and employment status: An analysis of PIAAC's U.S. dataset.*

Invited researcher by the Institute of Educational Statistics to participate in the training to use the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) data, leading to a collaboration with two partners. My expertise in large-scale assessments and interest in unemployment and the underemployment of vulnerable populations was used to collaborate with researchers interested in adult literacy and language. I developed the research questions, variable selection was based on her knowledge in that area and analyses were conducted using multiple regressions. She and her team received an AERA Early career Award based on this study of the 2012/2014 data. They explored relationships between literacy skills and unemployment for U.S. adults. The resulting models found literacy is significantly associated with Employment Status. Control variables more strongly associated with Employment Status than literacy (after controlling all variables) included: age of English language acquisition, educational attainment, gender, and age. Following the 2018 award, American Institutes of Research (AIR) funded a study for a second study of the PIAAC data.

2018 AERA Early Career Award for Adult Literacy and Adult Education

Adult Literacy and Adult Education Dream Deferred? Equity, Employment, & Adults' Literacy Skills: An Analysis of the U.S. PIAAC Dataset.

Invited Speaker

Cizek, G., **Gholson, M.**, Garcia, E., & Shultz, P.K. (2022). *Conceptualizations of fairness: An examination of assessment design.* In Broken systems of assessment: Addressing fairness and equity challenges in special populations. [Invited speaker] Annual Meeting of National Council of Measurement in Education (NCME), April 23, 2022.

Gholson, M. (2021). *Methods for Improving Cognitive Labs using Purposeful Sampling Procedures.* CCSSO Students with Disabilities Task Force, July 30, 2021.

Gholson, M., Vergas, V. & Warkomski, F. (2021). *Deep Dive into Critical Elements 5.4 & 6.4.* Invited expert panelist for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/08/Webinar-PPT-slides-PDF.pdf>

Gholson, M., Thacker, A. & Winter, P. (2021). *Deep Dive into Critical Elements 2.1 & 3.1.* Invited expert panelist for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2021/08/Webinar-3-Assessment-Peer-Review-8.12.21.pdf>

Gholson, M. (2018). *State Assessment Peer Review Seminar: Session B-2 Alternate ELP Achievement Standards & C-1 State Critical Elements: Inclusion.* Invited expert panelist for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. <https://apps1.seiservices.com/oss-sapr/Materials.aspx>

Gholson, M. & Lyon, C. (2018). *A Logic Model: Informing a theory of action for alternate English language proficiency assessments.* Presented for the CCSSO Assessing Special Education Students (ASES) State Collaborative on Assessment and Students Standards (SCASS) Fall Meeting, Boston, MA, October 9, 2018

Professional Service

U.S. Department of Education

2015-2023 Lead state assessment peer reviewer for the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), School Support and Accountability (SSA)

American Education for Research (AERA)

2023-2021 Program Chair, Inclusion & Accessibility Special Interest Group (SIG 96)

2020-2019 President, Inclusion & Accessibility Special Interest Group (SIG 96)

2022-2021 Division D Chair for Mixed Methods Subdivision

2022-2021 Division D Communications Chair

National Council for Measurement in Education (NCME)

2022 Invited speaker, Large-scale Assessment Methodology for Special Populations

2019 Chair & Discussant for Fairness in Testing

2018 Invited speaker for the Institute of Educational Sciences (IES) on the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) 21 Consortia

2012-2015 Technical Advisory Committee member ELPA 21 Consortia

Smarter Balanced (SBAC) Consortia

2010-2015 Students with Disabilities Advisory Committee Member

Funded Projects

Gholson, M. (2023). ETS External Contract [\$181,000].

Gholson, M. (2022). ETS External Contract [\$207,000].

Gholson, M. & Guzman-Orth (2022). NAEP Survey Assessments Innovation Lab (SAIL)
Reimagining Fairness: NAEP Accessibility Explorations [\$280,000.00].

Rikoon, S. & Gholson, M. (2022). Special Olympics International Program Evaluation
[\$500,000.00].

Saal, L. K., Gholson, M., Machtmes, R., & Machtmes, K. (2018). (PIs) American Institutes of
Research (AIR), PIAAC Research Funding, Associations between adults' numeracy
skills and employment status: An analysis of PIAAC's U.S. dataset. December 1, 2016
[\$10,000.00].