What Will Be The Focus of the Panelists?

**Henry Walker** will create the appropriate context and consider the role of attitudinal studies of students as they progress through a computing curriculum.

**Mark Guzdial** will discuss the road educators have travelled in creating such instruments.

**Ali Erkan** will review a survey instrument developed by the University of Maryland Physics Education Research Group.

**Steve Cooper** will present the importance of gathering this information for curriculum design from the perspective of grant agencies.
The Maryland Physics Expectations Survey (MPEX)

- Students are not "blank slates" in terms of...
  - ...their experience of the world
  - ...what they think their chosen major entails
  - ...their understanding of the process of learning

- For effective instruction, it is important...
  - ...to know their expectations, beliefs, assumptions
  - ...to understand the attitudinal consequences
    attitudes: \( f(\text{expectations, beliefs, assumptions}) \)

- MPEX is an instrument (34-item Likert-scale, agree/disagree) designed by University of Maryland Physics Education Research Group to assess students’ initial attitudinal state
Dimensions of Classification

**Independence:** Beliefs about learning physics

**Effort:** Beliefs about the kind of activities and work necessary to make sense out of physics

**Coherence:** Beliefs about the structure of physics knowledge

**Concepts:** Beliefs about the content of physics knowledge

**Reality Link:** Beliefs about the connection between physics and reality

**Math Link:** Beliefs about the role of mathematics in learning physics
Calibration/Test Groups of the Instrument

**Experts**: College faculty who are part of a FIPSE\(^1\)-sponsored project

**College Teachers**: University and college teachers

**HS Teachers**: High school teachers

**USIPOT Teachers**: Members of the US International Physics Olympics Team

**UMCP pre**: UMCP engineering students entering the calc-based physics sequence

\(^1\)Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
Processing the Responses

A response in agreement with the expert response is favorable.
A response in disagreement with the expert response is unfavorable.

$x$-axis is the collective percentage of unfavorable responses of a group.
$y$-axis is the collective percentage of favorable responses of a group.
Results from Research Universities

Ohio State (OSU)
University of Maryland (UMCP)
Minnesota (UMN)
Results from Smaller Schools

A public two year college (TYC)
Dickinson College (DC)
A small public liberal arts college (PLA)
Steve’s Turn...

The rest to be projected after the survey is completed (if needed)
## MPEX Question Clusters: Favorable Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>MPEX Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td>Takes responsibility for constructing own understanding</td>
<td>1, 8, 13, 14, 17, 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coherence</strong></td>
<td>Believes physics needs to be considered as a connected, consistent framework</td>
<td>12, 15, 16, 21, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Concepts</strong></td>
<td>Stresses understanding of the underlying ideas and concepts</td>
<td>4, 19, 26, 27, 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reality link</strong></td>
<td>Believes ideas learned in physics are relevant and useful in a wide variety of real contexts</td>
<td>10, 18, 22, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Math link</strong></td>
<td>Considers mathematics as a convenient way of representing physical phenomena</td>
<td>2, 6, 8, 16, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effort</strong></td>
<td>Makes the effort to use information available and tries to make sense of it</td>
<td>3, 6, 7, 24, 31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## MPEX Question Clusters: Unfavorable Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Claustel</th>
<th>Favorable</th>
<th>MPEX Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Takes what is given by authorities (teacher, text) without evaluation</td>
<td>1, 8, 13, 14, 17, 27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Believes physics can be treated as unrelated facts or “pieces”</td>
<td>12, 15, 16, 21, 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concepts</td>
<td>Focuses on memorizing and using formulas</td>
<td>4, 19, 26, 27, 32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reality link</td>
<td>Believes ideas learned in physics has little relation to experiences outside the classroom</td>
<td>10, 18, 22, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math link</td>
<td>Views the physics and the math as independent with little relationship between them</td>
<td>2, 6, 8, 16, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>Does not attempt to use available information effectively</td>
<td>3, 6, 7, 24, 31</td>
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</table>
Physics Baseline

“Respond with the answer that we hope would be given by students”

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</table>

Strongly agree + agree → A
Strongly disagree + disagree → D
Possible Research Goals MPEX Publications

- How do the attitudinal states of students in university physics differ from the views of experts?
Possible Research Goals MPEX Publications

- How do the attitudinal states of students in university physics differ from the views of experts?
- To what extent do the attitudinal states of a class vary from institution to institution?
Possible Research Goals MPEX Publications

- How do the attitudinal states of students in university physics differ from the views of experts?
- To what extent do the attitudinal states of a class vary from institution to institution?
- How are the attitudinal states of a class changed as the result of one semester of instruction in various learning environments?