

Daniel J. Mueller

Dan Mueller is the quintessential Midwesterner. Born and raised in the Chicago area, he is the eldest of the three sons of Emil and Paula Mueller. Despite his urban background, he developed a great love of the outdoors and is an avid fisherman to this day. He stayed close to home for his university education, completing his undergraduate degree at Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois, in 1963. For a time he considered becoming a Lutheran minister but eventually settled on teaching, a decision that has set the agenda for his career. After a brief stint as an elementary school teacher, Dan returned to school to earn a master's degree in sociology (1965) and a Ph.D. in educational psychology (1969) from the University of Illinois. His first and last job after graduate school has been as a professor of education at Indiana University.

Dan arrived at Indiana University at a time of rapid expansion. The faculty in the School of Education numbered over 150 and quite a few of us who are now reaching retirement age were hired around this time. (We are the "baby boomers" of the School of Education!) Dan's specialty is educational and psychological measurement. He has also taught courses in statistics and, drawing upon his degree in sociology, courses in social psychology. Generations of graduate and some undergraduate students have taken their measurement and assessment courses from Dan. He has served as the methodology expert on numerous dissertation committees, making many important contributions.

In characterizing Dan's numerous contributions to Indiana University, two words come to the forefront: service and commitment. From his earliest days, Dan has undertaken tasks for his department and university that entailed significant sacrifice on his part, but needed to be done. In 1979 the Department of Educational Psychology was in rather urgent need of a chair to lead the formation of a new "core" department consisting of both IU Bloomington and IUPUI faculty, but none of the senior faculty was available or willing to serve. As a newly tenured associate professor, Dan stepped in and led us through this difficult period. Similarly, Dan assumed the position of director of graduate studies for the School of Education in 1991, when some recent changes in policy and procedures had created serious problems for the school. During this period Dan set in place most of the policies and procedures that currently guide graduate programs in the School of Education. And late in his career, at a time when many senior faculty are winding down, Dan once again took the chair of his department and has been active and effective in leading us through yet another difficult period of reorganization.

But perhaps the trait that most characterizes Dan is his commitment to a set of values about what it means to be a researcher, a scholar, a professional, and a responsible citizen. Dan sets high standards for himself and for others. He is a demanding but fair teacher, expecting the best from his students. He has strong views about educational measurement and assessment, and while he is respectful of those who hold alternative views, he always stresses the importance of being able to present and defend one's position. You may not always agree with Dan Mueller, but you can be sure that his position will be well-articulated, logically coherent, and deeply held. As a colleague he is an insightful commentator, an inquirer who brings a healthy skepticism to any debate. Many of us can cite instances where Dan's penetrating questions and comments have led us to new insights into our own work. And yet he does not compartmentalize his thinking to academic contexts. He is constantly looking for links between our work as educational psychologists and our actions as responsible citizens. He himself has undertaken a number of service commitments including teaching and working in Indonesia, Poland, and Malawi.

There is one more word that describes Dan Mueller: kind. Many of us can remember stressful moments in our lives where Dan Mueller was there to provide emotional and physical support—visiting an ailing faculty spouse, providing respite for a co-worker who was overwhelmed by the responsibilities of caring for her spouse, keeping in touch with a retired faculty member who sometimes felt isolated from the department, spending some quiet time with a colleague who was going through a difficult period. More than a colleague, he is a friend we can count on. We know we will be able to continue to count on him as he moves into a retirement filled with projects he has been putting off far too long and with frequent visits to his three daughters and two (so far) grandchildren.

Don Cunningham