Yiwang Li

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Current position

PhD Candidate, University of California Riverside

Research interests

College readiness and persistence, student achievement, student mobility, equity of access to education, special education, teacher labor markets, and machine learning applications in education.

Education

2017- Ph.D. in **Education Policy Analysis and Leadership**, University of California - Riverside
2021 M.A. in **Research, Evaluation, Measurement, and Statistics**, University of California - Riverside
2012-2016 B.S. in **Education and Public Policy** (w/ Minor in Sociology), Pennsylvania State University - University Park

Professional Experience

2024-2025 *Graduate Mentor* for the TRIO College Programs at UCR
2018-2025 *Graduate Researcher* and *quantitative lead* for five major research grants (NSF, IES, and Haynes) at UCR
2021-2023 *Instructor* at UCR
2021 *Researcher* for the Center for Social Innovation (CSI) at UCR
2018-2020 *Teaching Assistant* at UCR
2016-2017 *Data Analyst* for the New York City Department of Education (Office of Teacher Effectiveness)
2015 *Policy Intern* for the Talent Search Program – Federal TRIO Programs at Penn State
2015-2016 *Co-founder & Treasurer* for the Student Together in Education Policy (STEP) at Penn State

2013-2016 *Supervisor* for the Information Technology Service at Penn State
2014-2016 *Lab Assistant* for the IT Lab Consulting at Penn State
2012 *Elementary School Teacher*

Teaching

2023 *Instructor* for **Introduction to Education Policy** (EDUC023) at UCR
2022 *Instructor* for **Graduate Statistics and Programming** Bootcamp (mandatory for first-year PhD students with grants) at UCR
2021 *Instructor* for **Educational Research Methods** (EDUC118) at UCR
2018-2020 *Teaching Assistant* for Introduction to Education Policy (EDUC023) at UCR
2018 *Teaching Practicum* at UCR

Working Papers

Yiwang Li. (2025). *A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness* (dissertation)

Yiwang Li. (2025). *A Hidden Markov Model Approach to Predict College Readiness* (dissertation)

Yiwang Li, Yulie Park, Xingyao Xiao. (2023). *Mapping books across curricula using representation learning*

Suneal Kolluri, Thomas M. Smith, **Yiwang Li**, Robert K. Ream, Cassandra M. Guarino. (2024). *Outliers for Equity: How Leaders Frame College Choice in California's Riverside County* (under review)

Cassandra M. Guarino, Anna Bargagliotti, **Yiwang Li**, Hana Kang, Thomas M. Smith. (2024). *Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?* (under review)

Anna Bargagliotti, Cassandra Guarino, **Yiwang Li**, Robert Rovetti, Jelena Trajkovic, Christine Alvarado, Lisa Martin-Hansen. (2025). *Equity of Access to Computer Science: Factors Impacting the Characteristics and Success of Undergraduate CS Majors*

Lucrecia Santibañez, Cassandra Guarino, Robert Ream, Hana Kang, **Yiwang Li**. (2023). *Variation in the Extent of School Mobility Among Vulnerable Students in California*

Cassandra Guarino, Lucrecia Santibañez, Robert Ream, Hana Kang, **Yiwang Li**. (2023). *Impact of school mobility on vulnerable students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes*

Thomas M. Smith, **Yiwang Li**, Cassandra M. Guarino, Anna Bargagliotti, Hana Kang. (2023).

Have Common Core State Standards and Aligned Assessments Narrowed the Poverty Gap in Mathematics Achievement?

Fang Yun, **Yiwang Li**. (2022). *The Contributing Factors to Anxiety and Depression among Chinese International Students during COVID-19*

Cassandra M. Guarino, **Yiwang Li**, Anna Bargagliotti, Thomas M. Smith, Hana Kang. (2021). *Racial Achievement Disparities in Mathematics Pre and Post the Common Core–Aligned Assessments*

Yiwang Li. (2020). *The effect of Janus v. AFSCME on teacher pay*

Conference Presentation

2025 "Gender equity in access to computer science versus other majors", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2025, Denver

2023 "A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago

2023 "A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness", Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2023, Denver

2023 "A Machine Learning framework to predict college readiness", Education Leadership Data Analytics 2023 Conference (ELDA2023), June 2023, New York (accepted, but unable to attend)

2023 "Mapping books across curricula using representation learning", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago

2023 "Have Common Core State Standards and Aligned Assessments Narrowed the Poverty Gap in Mathematics Achievement?", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago

2023 "Interplay of gender and self-management in mathematics performance when students are on the move", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago

2023 "Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2023, Chicago

2023 "Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?", Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2023, Denver

2023 "Did the Common Core and its aligned computerized assessments affect the mathematics performance of students with special needs?", University of California Center for Research on Special Education, Disabilities, and Developmental Risk (UC SPEDDR), January 2023, Riverside

2022 "Mapping books across curricula using representation learning", Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2022, Denver

2022 "Mapping books across curricula using representation learning", Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE), September 2022, Arlington

2022 "Outliers for Equity: Choosing (and Not Choosing) College in California's Inland Empire", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2022, San Diego

2022 "Racial Achievement Disparities in Mathematics Pre and Post the Common Core–Aligned Assessments", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2022, San Diego

2022 "The Impact of Moving Across Schools on Academic, Social-Emotional, and Behavioral Outcomes for Students in California", Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP), March 2022, Denver

2022 "Impact of school mobility on vulnerable students' academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes", Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), November 2022, Washington DC

2021 "Variation in the Extent of School Mobility Among Vulnerable Students in California", American Educational Research Association (AERA), April 2021, Online Conference

Research Grants Worked

2022-2025 *Graduate Student Researcher* for "Equity of Access to Computer Science: Factors Impacting the Success and Characteristics of Undergraduate CS Majors," (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), 2020-2023, NSF, $1,498,000.

2020-2024 *Graduate Student Researcher* for "Uprooting Children: The Risks and Rewards of Mobility for Vulnerable Students in California's Public Schools," (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), 2019-2023, NSF, $694,964.

2020-2024 *Graduate Student Researcher* for "Uprooting Children: The Risks and Rewards of Mobility for Vulnerable Students in California's Public Schools," (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), Institute of Education Sciences, $594,219.

2017-2022 *Graduate Student Researcher* for "Examining Disparities in Mathematics Achievement to Promote Educational Equity," (PI: Dr. Cassandra Guarino), 2018-2021, John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation, Major Research Grants, $200,000.

2017-2022 *Graduate Student Researcher* for "Best Practices to Mitigate Remediation of Riverside County Students," (PI: Dr. Thomas Smith), 2017-2020, John Randolph Haynes and Dora Haynes Foundation, Major Research Grants, $199,895.

Service

2023 *Reviewer* for K-12 Standards, Accountability, and Assessment (AEFP 2024, Baltimore)

2023 *Reviewer* for the Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education (SIGCSE TS - ACM 2024, Portland)

2023 *Reviewer* for Division H - Section 1: Applied Research in Schools (AERA 2024, Philadelphia)

2023 *Reviewer & Subcommittee* for (inaugural) SOE Graduate Research Conference (SOE GRC 2023, Riverside)

2023 *Chair* for Division L - Section 9: Policy Implementation and Going to Scale (AERA 2023, Chicago)

2023 *Chair* for Division L - Section 5: Testing, Accountability and Data Use (AERA 2023, Chicago)

2023 *Chair* for SIG-Data-Driven Decision Making in Education (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022 *Chair* for the Session 2.09 - New methods to improve policy and policy decision making (AEFP 2022, Denver)
2022 *Reviewer* for the Division L - Section 9: Policy Implementation and Going to Scale (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022 *Reviewer* for the SIG-Data-Driven Decision Making in Education (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022 *Reviewer* for the Division H - Section 1: Applied Research in Schools (AERA 2023, Chicago)
2022 *Reviewer* for the Division H - Section 2: Program Evaluation in Schools (AERA 2023, Chicago)

Awards

2025 Humanities Graduate Student Research (GSR) Grant from Center for Ideas and Society ($1,000)
2025 Research Fund from the EDPAL program at UCR School of Education ($1,500)
2022-2025 Multiple Conference Travel Grants from UCRSOE & GSA ($1,500+)
2023 AERA Travel Award from the Data-driven Decision Making (DDDM) in Education SIG
2021 Selected as graduate representative for the Gates Notes Deep Dive at the Gates Foundation
2017-2021 Dean's Distinguished Fellowship at UCR
2015-2016 Dean's List at PSU

Quantitative Skills

Statistical Software: Stata, Python, R
Statistical Methods: General and Generalized Linear Models, Multilevel Modeling, Longitudinal Analysis, Causal Inference (Applied Econometrics), Predictive (ML) Modeling, Markov Models
Other Statistics Training: Probability Theory, Statistical Inference, Advanced Statistical Methods
Other Tools: Tableau, SPSS, SAS, QGIS, LaTex, Git, PostgreSQL, HTML
Libraries: Keras, Scikit-learn, PyTorch, Tensorflow, Matplotlib, Tidyverse

Professional Memberships

The American Educational Research Association (AERA)
The Association for Education Finance and Policy (AEFP)
The Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness (SREE)

Last updated: March 18, 2025