

**A Rich Resource for Faculty Part 3:**  
**How AERA Can Help You**  
**Dr. Thompson's Mentoring Tip for the Week**

February 11, 2013

Dear Colleague:

During my early years as a university professor, in an effort to be selected as a presenter at its annual meeting, I routinely submitted conference proposals to the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Throughout those years, several—but not all--of my papers were accepted. In 2003, however, I thought of another way to benefit from attending the annual meeting. That year, instead of only presenting a conference paper, I decided to try to secure a book deal as well. As a result, I arrived at the annual meeting armed with several copies of a book query letter that I'd created, and planned to meet as many book editors as possible.

The strategy worked. Lesley Iura, an editor at Jossey Bass, seemed excited about my query letter. She asked me to email the table of contents, the introduction, and a sample chapter to her. Several months later, Ms. Iura sent a book contract to me, and in 2004, *Through Ebony Eyes: What Teachers Need to Know but Are Afraid to Ask About African American Students* was published.

Two years later, a friend, Dr. Angela Louque and I, attended another AERA Annual Meeting. One of our main goals was to distribute a query letter about a collaborative book project that we envisioned. As a result, John Von Knorring, the publisher of Stylus, requested that we email more information about the proposed book to him. Upon receiving this information, he offered us a contract, and in 2005, he published

our book *Exposing the Culture of Arrogance in the Academy: A Blueprint for Increasing Black Faculty Satisfaction*.

I shared these stories with you to emphasize that AERA can become another rich resource for you. In addition to the possibility of presenting peer-referred papers, having personalized discussions with journal editors, networking with higher education faculty from the U.S. and abroad, and meeting with book editors and publishers at the annual meetings, AERA can benefit you in several other ways. Therefore, if you aren't already using AERA to your advantage, I hope that the following information will persuade you to do so:

### **What is AERA?**

According to its website, AERA was established in 1916, and its 25,000 members include researchers, faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. AERA's mission is "to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good."

### **What are some of the resources that AERA provides?**

In addition to sponsoring meetings and conferences, AERA offers professional development opportunities, publishes books, research reports, and several journals, and attempts to impact education-related policies and initiatives. Some of the organization's benefits are only open to individuals who have paid a membership fee to join; others, such as research reports that are posted on the website, are free.

### **What type of professional development opportunities does AERA offer?**

AERA's Professional Advancement component includes funding possibilities through grants and fellowships. The career advancement section publicizes job openings and gives employers a venue to post job positions. Training courses and webinars are additional professional development options.

### **What journals does AERA publish?**

AERA publishes six journals: *American Educational Research Journal*; *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*; *Educational Researcher*; *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*; *Review of Educational Research*; and *Review of Research in Education*. These journals are viewed as top-tiered, peer-refereed journals, and each can be accessed electronically. To learn more about AERA journals and how to submit articles to them, use the following link:

<http://www.aera.net/Publications/Journals/tabid/10232/Default.aspx>.

### **How can AERA help me with my writing?**

An obvious way that AERA can help you with your writing is for you to actually submit a manuscript to one of the AERA journals. This will familiarize you with the journal submission process. Furthermore, getting your work published in an AERA journal will strengthen your tenure portfolio.

Second, the AERA website contains the link to an excellent article, "How to Publish in Scholarly Journals," by Klingner, Scanlon, and Pressley. This article, which was originally published in *Educational Researcher* in 2005, describes the writing

process, the editorial and peer-review process, and tips about how to write, organize, and submit an article to a journal. You can access the article by using the following link:

<http://edr.sagepub.com/content/34/8/14.full.pdf+html?ijkey=ObKXUy1ALYbjI&keytype=ref&siteid=spedr>.

A third way that AERA can help you with your writing is through its “Research Points,” a series that is posted on the AERA website. You can use the reports, which are written by renowned scholars, to stay current about education-related topics, and also to supplement the introduction and literature sections of journal articles that you write.

Reports that you can download under the Publications: Research Points segment of the website include:

“Ensuring Early Literacy Success”

“Time to Learn”

“Science Education That Makes Sense”

“Do the Math: Cognitive Demand Makes a Difference”

“Foreign Language Instruction: Implementing the Best Teaching Methods”

“Teaching Teachers: Professional Development to Improve Student Achievement”

“Teachers Matter: Evidence from Value-Added Assessment”

“Closing the Gap: High Achievement for Students of Color”

“English Language Learners: Boosting Academic Achievement”

“Standards and Tests: Keeping Them Aligned”

**When is the next annual meeting?**

This year, AERA's Annual Meeting will be held in San Francisco, California April 27<sup>th</sup> through May 1<sup>st</sup>. The theme is "Education, and Poverty: Theory, Research, Policy, and Praxis."

**When can I submit a proposal for an upcoming annual meeting?**

Currently, AERA conference organizers are requesting submissions for next year's (2014) annual meeting, from individuals who would like to present a paper, conduct a professional development course or workshop, or volunteer to serve as a reviewer. The deadline for submissions is July 23, 2013. If you are interested in submitting a paper or proposal, or volunteering to review papers, click on the following link for more information:

<http://www.aera.net/tabid/10208/Default.aspx>

**Can you suggest any tips on how I can prepare a paper to submit to AERA?**

Several professors have presented papers at AERA. Some may even work in your department. Ask around campus, and find out who is willing to give you pointers. At your request, I can also email you "A Cry for Help: What Pre-service Teachers and Educators Believe About African American Student Underachievement," a paper that I presented at an AERA Annual Meeting a few years ago. You can use it as a model to help you organize a paper of your own.

**Conclusion**

I hope that you'll visit the AERA website, and submit a conference proposal before the July 23, 2013 deadline. I also hope that you'll submit an article to an AERA

journal. If for some reason, the article is rejected (like one of mine was years ago), read the reviewers' comments carefully, revise the article, and submit it to another journal as soon as possible. In the meantime, hang in there, have a great week, **keep writing**, and be on the lookout for next week's mentoring advice.

Blessings and peace,

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