

**A Rich Resource for Faculty:  
Using the National Center for Education Statistics  
to Support Your Research Agenda**

**Dr. Thompson's Mentoring Tip for the Week**

January 22, 2013

Dear Colleague:

Several years ago, I had the privilege of attending a research training session in a breathtakingly beautiful, wooded area of Maryland. Not only did I learn practical information that I could use for one or more of my writing projects and grant proposals, but on top of this, my travel to and from the training site, and my food, and lodging were free. Each day, my breakfast, lunch, and dinner were prepared by an excellent cook, and I had my own private room. During my evening strolls in this serene environment, I saw deer and other colorful birds.

The training session was sponsored and paid for by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In order to become a participant in the training session, all I had to do was to submit a two-page proposal online before the required deadline. In my proposal, I stipulated the NCES database that I wanted to use (The National Assessment of Educational Progress Fourth Grade Reading Scores), how I planned to use the data, and I provided background information about my knowledge of statistics. As a scholar, because the NCES has been such a rich resource for me throughout the years, I am hoping that the following related information will motivate you to use the NCES to your advantage.

**What Exactly is the NCES?**

According to its website:

The purpose of the National Center for Education Statistics' website is to provide clear, complete information about NCES' mission and activities, and to serve the research, education and other interested communities . . . .

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) is the primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations. NCES is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences . . . .

The National Center for Education Statistics fulfills a Congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report complete statistics on the condition of American education; conduct and publish reports; and review and report on education activities internationally.

### **How Can I Learn More About the NCES?**

Here is the link to the NCES home page: <http://nces.ed.gov>.

This link will take you to the NCES Site Index: <http://nces.ed.gov/help/sitemap.asp>.

### **How Can I Benefit From Using the NCES' Resources?**

There are at least two ways that you can benefit from using the NCES' resources. First, I suggest that you join the NCES listserv, so that you can receive updates about newly published NCES reports, statistical tables, and future training sessions. Joining the listserv will make it easier for you to know what is available

and it will ensure that the links to recent NCES publications will be emailed directly to you.

Second, I recommend that you submit a proposal to attend one of the NCES summer training sessions. The training session will teach you how to use an NCES database, and enable you to design a study, and use the study as the basis for a journal article or grant proposal. Attending a training session will also give you a great opportunity to network with faculty and graduate students from universities throughout the U.S.

### **When Will the Next Training Sessions Be Held?**

There are two upcoming training sessions. The next NCES Training Conference will be held on June 12-14, 2013 in Washington DC. You may click on the following link to read the announcement and guidelines for the proposal. The proposal is due on April 1, 2013.

<http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/conferences/?id=1027&cid=2>.

The NCES will host a second training conference, "NAEP/NIES Database Training Seminar for Research on American Indian/Alaska Native Students," on June 26-28, 2013 in Washington, DC. The proposal deadline is April 30, 2013. For more information and the specific proposal guidelines, use the following link:

<http://ies.ed.gov/whatsnew/conferences/?id=1026&cid=2>.

### **Besides Training Sessions, What are Some Additional Resources That the NCES Provides?**

According to its website:

[The] NCES issues numerous publications and datasets each year.

These include: early releases, issue briefs, statistical reports, directories, and handbooks of standard terminology. Many publications report the findings of specific surveys, but at least three--[Digest of Education Statistics](#), [Projections of Education Statistics](#), and [The Condition of Education](#)--cover the field of education statistics from a broad perspective.

### **What are Some Examples of the Types of Reports That are Available on the NCES Website?**

“Trends in Debt for Bachelor’s Degree Recipients a Year After Graduation: 1994, 2001 and 2009”

“First-Year Undergraduate Remedial Coursetaking: 1999-2000, 2003-04, and 2007-08”

“Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study”

“The Condition of Education: Elementary and Secondary Education”

“2011 Early Childhood Longitudinal Study”

“On Track to Complete? A Taxonomy of Beginning Community College Students and Their Outcomes 3 Years After Enrolling: 2003-04 through 2006”

“Late High School Dropouts: Characteristics, Experiences, and Changes Across Cohorts”

“Highlights From PIRLS 2011: Reading Achievement of U.S. Fourth-Grade Students in an International Context”

“Vocabulary Results from the 2009 and 2011 NAEP Reading Assessments”

“NAEP High School Transcript Study”

“NAEP National Indian Education Study”

“Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Findings of the National Adult Literacy Survey”

“Literacy Behind Prison Walls”

“Literacy of Older Adults in America”

“Career and Technical Education in the United States: 1990–2005”

“Students Entering and Leaving Postsecondary Occupational Education: 1995-2001”

“Labor Force Participation in Formal Work-Related Education in 2000”

“Highlights From TIMSS 2011: Mathematics and Science Achievement of U.S. Fourth and Eighth-Grade Students in an International Context”

“Economic Outcomes of High School Completers and Noncompleters”

“Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Minorities”

“Labor Force Participation of Persons 16 and Over”

“Youth Indicators 2011”

“Enrollment in Postsecondary Institutions, Fall 2011; Financial Statistics, Fiscal Year 2011; and Graduation Rates, Selected Cohorts, 2003-2008 : First Look (Provisional Data)”

“Early K–12 Teaching Experiences of 2007–08 Bachelor's Degree Recipients”

### **What Are Some Examples of The Types of Tables That I Can Find on the NCES Website?**

“An Overview of Classes Taken and Credits Earned by Beginning Postsecondary Students”

“Beginning K–12 Teacher Characteristics and Preparation by School Type, 2009”

“Percentage of Public School Students in 9<sup>th</sup> Through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Who Had Ever Been Suspended or Expelled, By Sex and Race/Ethnicity: 1999, 2003, and 2007”

### **Conclusion**

I hope that this information has inspired you to:

- a. join the NCES listserv,
- b. use the reports and other information in your writing projects, and
- c. submit a proposal to attend one of the empowering NCES training sessions.

In the meantime, hang in there, have a great week, **keep writing**, and be on the lookout for next week’s mentoring advice: “A Rich Resource for Faculty Part 2.”

Blessings and peace, GT