

Critical Educators for Social Justice (CESJ)
Special Interest Group (SIG)
Meeting Minutes
AERA 4-9-07

Meeting convened at 6:15

Agenda:

- Welcome and Goals
- Business Reports
- Nominations and Voting
- Panel Discussion
- Small Group Discussion
- Whole Group Dialogue
- Next Steps

Welcome and Goals:

Meeting began with a welcome by Margarita Berta-Avila (SIG Co-Representative) who reviewed the work the SIG has been engaged in during the past year. At that time, we were at a crossroad as we considered the mission of our SIG and how to bring it to fruition within the context of AERA. The purpose of the business meeting today is to engage in a discussion on the implications of the current political and educational climate on our work.

Business Reports:

Chris(tine) Clark (Communications Representative) reported that next year's sessions will be based on the number of proposals that are submitted. Each SIG will get 15 sessions by default, one business meeting and one paper session. The SIG will also have one additional per session for every hundred members. The balance of available sessions will be assigned based on the number of proposals received. Therefore, it would benefit us to have as many submissions as possible. Suggestion was made to structure the call for papers such that it attracts the higher number of proposals.

Discussion ensued regarding the reconstruction of the presentation format with some concerned voiced over the rationale for the change.

It was suggested that we look critically at proposals and sessions and think about how we may want to do things differently.

Sally Thomas in conjunction with Yuri Wellington and Nana Osei-Kofi were program co-chairs. Sally reported there was a drop in submissions. Last year we received 70 proposals and approximately half were accepted. This year we only received 45. In reviewing proposals for next year, we may want focus on sessions which are highly interactive and address topics that are high interest as well those that use alternative presentation formats. This year we were able to have an invited session for the first time in our SIGs history.

Patricia Hinchey (Fiscal Co-Representative) provided an update on our finances.

Nominations and Voting:

Margarita noted that we have instituted a process of for continuity in leadership through staggered term limits allowing for mentoring to take place. We had two openings: Program Co-Chair (1) and Fiscal Co-Representative (1). There were no nominations from the floor. Patricia Alvarez McHatton was elected as the Program Co-Chair and Oscar Jimenez Castellanos was elected Fiscal Co-Representative.

Panel Discussion:

The purpose of the panel discussion was to share our stories, describing experiences as we continue our work in the context of the political climate. Further, we hoped to explore how we can maintain ourselves, our spirit, and our hope during these times. Panelist Julie Figueroa and Pat Hinchey provided their personal narratives and served as an impetus for small group and whole group discussion.

Small Group Discussion:

Participants worked in pairs discussing the panelists' comments and sharing what of those comments resonated with each person. In addition, each pair brainstormed actions that we could take within our SIG to continue our work with the goals of identifying actions that we could work on collaboratively and that would be sustainable.

Whole Group Discussion:

The whole group came back together to identify two to three tangible actions that SIG members could collaborate on and bring to fruition. Two main themes that emerged from the small group discussion were loneliness and how does the work we do get recognized. Several suggestions were made to address these themes:

- Provide a venue to meet beyond AERA, perhaps through a CESJ conference. This would provide an opportunity for collegiality and provide an opportunity to collaborate, exchange ideas, and provide support. Chris suggested possibly piggybacking on an existing conference such as NAME whose missions closely fits our own.
- Use the internet as a medium to diminish the sense of isolation and connect individuals who are doing similar work. CESJ does have a website and listserve that could be used for this purpose (<http://www.aeracesjsig.org/>). Through this venue we could develop discussion groups, podcasts, etc... as a way of keeping in touch.
- Consider beginning a journal that will publish the work we do or collaborating on an edited book.
- Include a listing of journals on our website that publishes work in social justice.
- Provide a mechanism for collaboration. Examples included co-authoring, reading each others' work and providing feedback, providing mentoring to help with publications, etc...
- Provide support during the tenure process by maintaining a link to individuals who can serve as outside reviewers.

Several participants volunteered to work on the suggestions. Names and emails are listed below. There will be a phone conference scheduled in May to discuss next steps. Margarita will facilitate the phone conference.

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