

Dear Arts-Based Educational Research SIG members,

With a global pandemic, this year has been particularly challenging for many of us, in ways that were unexpected and unprecedented. While the world focuses on the effects of the pandemic, folx in Black, Brown, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have not had the privilege of focusing **only** on the pandemic's disproportionately devastating effects. Instead, they are facing heightened racialized trauma and other intersected forms of oppression. They also are leading social movements and actions to abolish white supremacist systems, practices, and institutions.

It would be irresponsible of us to carry on business as usual or to offer a statement of solidarity that is performative in nature without any tangible actions of support and solidarity. Thus, in our last ABER Executive meeting, we had a deep, long discussion and recognized that while ABER has always maintained a friendly stance to expansiveness, generativity, and work arising from multiple locations, we have not fully centered ways that encourage more representation, inclusion, and participation of BIPOC communities in ABER. Consequently, many members of these communities have sought other homes within AERA, without considering ABER a space with strong commitment to and participation in culturally-situated, anti-racist, and anti-oppressionist work. Thus, we asked ourselves, "How might we show up in this moment and the moments that follow this one, to demonstrate a steadfast commitment to support BIPOC communities and challenge anti-Blackness, racism, and all forms of intersected oppression faced by many within and outside our communities?"

ABER values the lives of BIPOC folx and recognizes their human right to a dignified life and liberation. As such, ABER commits to dismantling anti-Black, racist, white supremacist structures and practices in academia. While unintentional, our lack of consistent effort to proactively create space for our BIPOC colleagues and students and transparently voice our anti-racist stance through concrete actions made us complicit with systemic racism. We share our humble apologies and offer an updated path of possibilities that honor our steadfast commitment to abolishing anti-Blackness, systemic racism, intersected forms of oppression, and white supremacy in all ways possible, as we can, from our positions of influence.

To that end, here are the tangible actions we are taking moving forward.

1. **ABER Submissions for AERA Annual Meeting (Deadline: July 22, 11:59 pm PDT)** – We will welcome, as we always have, submissions for the 2021 annual meeting that focus on various creative lenses and arts-based methodologies in diverse genres. AERA announced this year's focus to be on educational responsibility. We are asking our membership to consider the following: How might we imagine our responsibilities informed by anti-racist and anti-oppressionist stances in this current moment and moving forward? Thus, we will give preference to papers and symposiums that draw on integrating anti-racist or anti-oppressionist intersectional perspectives with creative methodologies. Beyond 2021, we will continue to encourage proposals that highlight intersections between anti-racist, abolitionist work and ABER methodologies.

2. **Preconference Activities** – We plan to approach other SIGs to invite them to collaborate with us for preconference activities. Creating a preconference allows us to offer more slots for presentations which can be listed in the program. ABER has passed 30 years as a SIG and while we could not honor such a milestone this year, we are hoping to do so in the upcoming year. We will focus on the next 30 years of ABER and our educational responsibilities that bring forward equity and freedom

from anti-Black, racist, white supremacist, and multiply-intersected structures and practices of oppression within education. We will reach out to the membership and beyond to help us plan for this event.

3. **Awards** – We will update our awards to include a focus on the intersection of anti-racist, anti-oppressionist perspectives and arts-based educational research. While we have never been opposed to nominations with this focus, we have also never actively and transparently centered these agendas.

4. **Mentoring** – We will reach out to our membership for volunteering to be a part of a mentoring committee, a new initiative that we are launching. We are looking at possibilities of mentoring graduate students, early-career scholars, minoritized scholars, and anyone else who would find this offering valuable. As much as possible, we would provide opportunities for meeting virtually rather than in-person in order to expand the limits of in-person mentoring at AERA annual meeting, which is costly for both domestic and international members.

5. **Digital Presence** – We will update our website and create spaces in Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We will share these spaces once we prepare them. Our goal is to use these spaces to build community, share work from diverse perspectives, encourage participation from the entire globe, and cultivate inclusive, representational dialogic spaces. **This statement will be hosted in all of our digital spaces.**

6. **Spotlight Workshops/Talks** – We will offer online workshops/talks open to everyone on relevant topics two to three times a year. The workshops/talks will spotlight our colleagues' work and offer ways in which we can continue to be in dialogue with each other while honoring diverse voices and approaches of doing art-based educational research. We also hope that these workshops will demonstrate our invitational stance and allow more people to see ABER SIG as one where they belong.

7. **Membership, Graduate Student Support** – We will work on enhancing and increasing our membership and graduate student support. We encourage all of you to please invite graduate students and other colleagues who would benefit from the activities of ABER. We need your support to grow our membership, and with the growth we would like to extend more graduate student travel awards to the conference. We believe that as a community we can focus on creativity, criticality, and contemplation simultaneously as we hold ourselves firm in our anti-racist and anti-oppressionist commitments.

Sincerely,

ABER Executive Committee

Kakali Bhattacharya, SIG Chair

Qiana Cutts, Program Chair

Adrienne Boulton, Secretary

Stephanie Anne Shelton, Treasurer

Travis Gratteau-Zinnel, Graduate Student Representative, Social Media Coordinator