



Inaugural Meeting of International Education Research Associations Held in Chicago, April 13–14, 2007

The Inaugural Meeting of the International Education Research Associations was held in Chicago on April 13 and 14 at the conclusion of the 2007 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), with 17 associations in attendance. Eva Baker, immediate Past President of AERA, and Felice Levine, AERA Executive Director, convened the meeting to initiate discussion about developing principles of agreement for international cooperation, including the possibility of establishing an international education research association. A maximum of two representatives were invited from each association.

In welcoming 22 representatives from around the globe (see list of attendees page 292), Baker and Levine indicated that they were pleased to host and arrange for the logistics of the meeting and that whatever was accomplished at this meeting or in the future at an international level should be a collective effort in definition and direction. Also in attendance were five members of the AERA Task Force on International Exploration, established by AERA to assist and advise the Association in the early stages of considering a possible international organization for education

research. AERA President William Tate, who had just commenced his term, also attended the session on Friday, April 13.

The purpose of this inaugural meeting was to bring together representatives from associations to learn more about education research organizations from across the world and to share ideas and opinions on what an international effort might include. In their opening remarks, Baker and Levine emphasized that all options were “on the table” and that this inaugural event was only a first opportunity to explore possibilities and talk. They expressed the hope that other associations not represented at this meeting would join the effort so that any initiative or plans for international cooperation could advance education research on a global scale.

Overviews of National and Regional Education Research Associations

Not unexpectedly, the brief descriptions of the national and regional education research associations indicated that they varied in size, scope, and formal organization across a range of dimensions. Nevertheless, discussion revealed striking commonalities in their commitment to high-quality research and its develop-

ment and dissemination worldwide. Representatives from several associations identified challenges confronting their organizations, including how better to represent research to governments and policy-makers, how to reach out more effectively to other similar research organizations, and how to reflect and represent member interests. Representatives from Europe cited challenges in developing associations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in working across different organizational and funding structures across nations, in developing arrangements for reciprocity, and in developing a European science citation index. Representatives from Asia and Africa noted the scarcity of education research associations across their continents as a major issue and challenge.

Views of an International Initiative

Participants generally agreed that the landscape of education research has changed dramatically in recent years, and they saw considerable potential for international cooperation in the exchange of work and ideas. A joint effort would involve having education research associations come together as professional organizations to share experiences and ideas



Left to right: Yin Cheong Cheng, Matthis Behrens, Erik De Corte, Maria de Ibarrola, Andrew Pollard, Leif Moos, Hassimi Maiga, Wim Jochems, Felice Levine, Barbara McCombs, Peter Van Petegem, Joyce King, Petronilha B. Gonçalves e Silva, Ciaran Sugrue, Carol Lee, Chung-Il Yun, Moira von Wright, Jeremy Hoad, Eva Baker, Rita Irwin, Eckhard Klieme, Daniel Koretz, Geoff Whitty, Oon-Seng Tan, Rob Cavanagh, Allan Pitman (Photo by Christina Paris)

regarding the advancement of research and the use of it. As one participant said, knowing that similar things work around the world is important. Also, learning from each other and considering where education research needs to be fostered worldwide can add to the scope, significance, and usefulness of education research.

Representatives also noted the value of internationalization of education research to help address research being shaped by political or policy agendas; they agreed that an international initiative could help in crafting arguments and joining forces to deal with the politics of advocacy on issues in education research. Many saw mutual benefits of fostering international discussions relating to the connection of evidence-based research to policy, the integration of equity and quality in education research, and exchanges of databases. Diversity in education research, whether within nations or across national boundaries, could also be fostered on a global scale.

Two other themes emerged repeatedly in the discussion sessions. One was capacity building and the need to consider geographic areas in the world where education research could be developed or strengthened. The second was the need for any potential international education research association to consider the place of language in scholarly communication. Representatives from several associations raised the question of which language(s) should be used in international discourse if an international organization is established. All agreed that these two issues would be important to weigh in the formation of any new entity.

Ideas and Aspirations for an International Education Research Association

Several themes emerged in the presentations of ideas for how an international initiative might be operationalized. Some participants cited the need for basic information about other education research associations and their activities as a starting point for an international effort. As a step to strong collaboration and cooperation, representatives thought it would be helpful to know more about other asso-

ciations and to identify common research needs that could be jointly developed on an international scale. Participants who expressed this view envisioned starting with basic projects on a modest scale; later, a consortium of associations could evolve that would facilitate communication and exchange of ideas as well as provide a structure for obtaining resources.

Though all representatives shared enthusiasm for working together to strengthen coordination, cooperation, and communication among education research associations, some were uncertain what form the international exchange should take and how much formal structure would be desirable in the beginning. For them, the more immediate issues for an international initiative were promoting and exchanging research agendas, developing mutual access among associations, creating opportunities to expand networking, and disseminating knowledge. Several representatives noted that a new organization would exist in a context with many other national, regional, and international education research organizations and should complement and enhance these existing institutions.

Other representatives noted that conversations on the internationalization of education research are already taking place; they emphasized the need for and value of establishing ties through a formal international organization or entity where member associations could work together on issues of common concern regarding the advancement of education research and building capacity for it worldwide. They thought that efforts should now be directed to developing the formal structures (bylaws, membership) required

to establish an international education research association. These representatives said that an international organization could begin by serving as a platform to share expertise, ideas, information, and resources and to network, later evolving into more formalized projects that would be carried out jointly.

Participants made clear that they were expressing personal opinions at this stage until their respective boards met and deliberated on commitments, actions, or decisions. Most of those in attendance believed that support for initiatives to internationalize education research would be forthcoming from their associations. Attendees at the meeting valued the fact that models for any future international education research entity had yet to be developed and that this inaugural meeting was a discussion at a very early stage. There was general support for the idea of exploration of options and taking a span of time to discuss and nurture possibilities.

Statement of Agreement on International Education Research

Based on the deliberations on April 13, the representatives of national and regional education research associations concluded that they could arrive at a statement of agreement by the end of the first day. Such a statement reflected a shared commitment to foster the internationalization of education research worldwide and provided a basis for continuing work. That 22 representatives of 17 associations were able to arrive at a unanimous statement of agreement reflected both the level of candor and the fundamental trust established in this group. The text of the statement appears below.

Statement of Agreement
Unanimously Adopted by Representatives Attending Inaugural
International Education Associations Meeting
April 13, 2007

Representatives of national and international education research associations convened on April 13–14, 2007, resolved to work together toward the development of approaches that would serve to advance education research and address such issues as building capacity and interest in education research, strengthening the articulation of education research policies, and promoting sound use and application of education research worldwide through international and reciprocal collaborations.

Working Task Groups and Next Steps

At the beginning of the second day, participants affirmed their strong sense of the value of a concerted international effort to advance education research through well-articulated global objectives. They reached consensus on the following basic themes for continued work and discussion:

1. Information gathering on education research associations
2. Support for education research exchange and reciprocity
3. Burning issues/topics for common projects
4. Technology and virtual exchange regarding education research
5. Aspirations/mission/rationale/purpose

of this activity
6. Organizational model or models

Participants volunteered to work in task groups and developed plans for proceeding. The task groups will work throughout the summer in preparation for the second meeting, to be held on September 8–9, 2007, following the Annual Meeting of the British Educational Research Association.

Representatives also concluded that a sequence of three more meetings over a 20-month period should be sufficient for the developmental work necessary to arrive at a plan and to determine the form that an organization, entity, or framework should take. The representatives of the 17 associations also planned to reach out to other education research associations

and to become more familiar with education research in countries without formal associations in an effort to identify relevant research communities worldwide. In addition to the second meeting to be held in September, a third meeting will be held in March 2008, aligned with the AERA Annual Meeting in New York, and a fourth and final meeting will be held in November 2008, aligned with the Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association in Australia.

Representatives from education research associations are expected to confer with their respective organizations as deliberations unfold over this time span. President Tate asked Past President Baker to continue her leadership role, along with Executive Director Levine, in representing AERA in this international initiative.

List of Attendees

Representatives of International Associations in Attendance:

American Educational Research Association
Eva Baker, President (2006–2007)
Felice Levine, Executive Director

Asia-Pacific Educational Research Association
Yin Cheong Cheng, President

Associação Brasileira de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação
Petronilha B. Gonçalves e Silva

Australian Association for Research in Education
Valerie Harwood, Executive Member
Rob Cavanagh, Director

British Educational Research Association
Geoff Whitty, President
Jeremy Hoad, CEO

Canadian Society for the Study of Education
Rita Irwin, President
Allan Pitman, President

Consejo Mexicano de Investigación Educativa
Maria de Ibarrola, President

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft
Eckhard Klieme, Director

Educational Research Association of Singapore
Oon-Seng Tan, President

Other Attendees from AERA Task Force on International Exploration:

Joyce King, Georgia State University
Daniel Koretz, Harvard University
Carol Lee, Northwestern University
Barbara McCombs, University of Denver
Andrew Pollard, University of London

Educational Studies Association of Ireland
Ciaran Sugrue, National Executive Member and General Editor, *Irish Educational Studies*

European Association for Research in Learning and Instruction
Erik De Corte, Founding President

European Educational Research Association
Wim Jochems, Treasurer

Flemish Educational Research Forum
Peter Van Petegem, President

Korean Society for the Study of Education
Chung-Il Yun, President

Nordic Educational Research Association
Moira von Wright, Board Member
Leif Moos, Chair

Reseau Ouest et Centre Africain de Recherche en Education
Hassimi Maiga, Founding Member

The Swiss Society for Research in Education
Matthis Behrens, President

Other AERA Attendees:

William F. Tate, President (2007–2008)
Katherine Rosich, Social Science Consultant
Christina Parisi, Executive Assistant