Disciplined Inquiry: Education Research in the Circle of Knowledge

At a time when knowledge creation and use requires spanning boundaries between academic disciplines, education researchers can take pride in their long tradition of multi-disciplinary work. AERA’s 2009 Annual Meeting celebrates this tradition and looks ahead to assess new ways that education research and disciplinary inquiry might be more effectively integrated.

Relations between education research and disciplinary inquiry have been reciprocal and multi-faceted. The disciplines have contributed a diverse array of theoretical insights and research methods to the study of education and its societal roles. Education research, in turn, has provided a major venue for testing theory and developing analytical methods, and its studies have helped refine and expand those theories in significant ways. More than multi-disciplinary endeavors in many other fields, education research has been inclusive in its application of disciplinary perspectives and in its respect for quantitative and qualitative methods. The result has been a uniquely rich capacity for education research to draw on a broad range of humanistic and scientific disciplines and to contribute widely to the improvement of education policy and practice.

The 2009 Annual Meeting provides an opportunity for renewed discussion and expansion of the role of education research as a hub of interdisciplinary scholarship. Of special note are papers and sessions that demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary research, the significance of multiple methodological perspectives, and interactions between education and its sister disciplines in the sciences and humanities.