AERA Annual Meeting Information on Accessibility of Session Presentations and Communication

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) is committed to building a culture of inclusion of people with diverse abilities. The roles of presenter, chair, discussant, and organizer are integral to creating inclusive sessions. The Association encourages participants to follow some basic guidelines to enhance the accessibility of presentations and communication. Session organizers and chairs are asked to emphasize the importance of these guidelines to all participants in sessions (e.g., presenters, chairs, discussants) in advance of the Annual Meeting and, when necessary, in guiding the conduct of the session itself. All presenters are encouraged to:

> • If there are handouts to be distributed to the audience, bring 3 to 4 large print copies (18-point font) and an electronic file of the handout saved in MS Word or RTF. If a participant requests a file of the handout following the Annual Meeting, please send the file in Word or RTF format as these formats are the most compatible with assistive technologies for readers with impaired vision. PDF files are not compatible with many screen readers and other technologies.

> • Use 18-point font or larger on any overhead or PowerPoint text. Smaller font may not be visible for the audience in the room.

> • Use the microphone at all times to ensure that those who are hearing impaired can participate. When taking questions, please ask the audience members to speak into the microphone, if one is available; otherwise, clearly restate their question into an available microphone at the podium.

> • Speak at a moderate rate in general, and especially in sessions where there are sign language interpreters so that the interpreters can keep pace with you. This is especially important if you are reading from the text of your paper or other sources, because it is tempting to read at a pace too fast for interpreters in such instances.

> • Consult with the session chair to identify those who need assistance. Meet with sign language interpreter(s) or others providing assistance before the start of the session if possible.

• In sessions where sign language interpreters are expected, bring a copy of your paper to give to the interpreter(s) while the session is being set up. This allows them to preview unfamiliar terminology, concepts, and so forth.

• Verbally describe any visual images, PowerPoint slides, or overheads for those participants who are blind or visually impaired.

• Presenters should offer a brief but adequate period of silence when using visuals (overheads, PowerPoints, and so forth). People who use sign language interpreters cannot attend to the interpreter and the visual simultaneously.

• Speak directly to individuals who are deaf or who have hearing impairments (not to their sign language interpreters).

• Help others remember to follow these access guidelines. Please note that all of these practices benefit people with and without disabilities. AERA's goal is to cultivate a universally accessible environment.

Note. AERA Council unanimously approved the use of these guidelines in January 2008. The Association appreciates the work of the Disability Studies in Education SIG in preparing this useful information.