

Q&A: Interview with Nicholas D. Hartlep

*Current Graduate Student Council Chair of the American Educational Research Association
Nicholas D. Hartlep shares his thoughts on supporting graduate students, education research, and
the future of academic publishing.*

As a student-edited, online, peer-reviewed academic journal, the *Berkeley Review of Education* (BRE) is part of a new wave of open-access journals that is shaping the debates around the future of academic publishing. As Chair of the Graduate Student Council, Nicholas Hartlep invited the BRE to host a panel at AERA 2012 on writing and editing for publication. As Nicholas finishes his graduate work at the Urban Education Doctoral Program at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, preparing to take on a tenure-track assistant professorship at Illinois State University, we asked him to share his thoughts on graduate student professional development, the BRE, and academic publishing more broadly.

BRE: Before we dive into education research, tell us about your research interests. What are you working on now and what would you like to work on in the future?

NH: I am currently writing a single-author book, *The Model Minority Stereotype: Demystifying Asian American Success*, which is being published by Information Age Publishing. The book's genesis emanated from my observation that there was a need for a volume that summarized and shared the tremendous amount of scholarship on this topic. I am convinced that the book will be extremely helpful for the Asian American community, and it is my hope that the book will become a centrally cited reference for this type of work. In addition to this project, I am also co-editing a volume entitled *Unhooking from Whiteness: The Key to Dismantling Racism in the United States*, which will be published by Sense in the Transgressions: Cultural Studies in Education Series. *Unhooking from Whiteness* includes auto-ethnographic chapters that provide non-white minority groups resources to avoid manipulation or exploitation by the hegemonic establishment. Whiteness work is important for Asian Americans since yellow is not part of the black-white binary. My intention is that my future scholarly work will continue to further the Academy's ability to problematize the model minority stereotype. I plan on doing this by creating new paradigms and theories that will aid in falsifying the myth's legitimacy. I am also engaged with research on the transracial adoption of Koreans, and with scholarship that deploys Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit).

BRE: Tell us about your role at AERA. In your experience, what supports do graduate students need to become scholars?

NH: Currently I serve as the Chair of the Graduate Student Council (GSC), a standing committee of AERA, with over 7,000 members. Previously I served as the GSC Chair-Elect, and prior to that position, I was a graduate student representative for Division K—

Teaching and Teacher Education. Given my multiple positions within AERA, I have had an opportunity to serve and work alongside countless graduate students, both domestically and internationally. It is my professional opinion that in order to become scholars, graduate students need mentorship and opportunities to develop and to socialize. Consequently, graduate students need opportunities to practice and hone the responsibilities that they will inherit when they enter the Academy. Equally important is the need for graduate students to be mentored cooperatively and collegially. This might entail co-authoring a book chapter or an article with a senior scholar or reviewing manuscript submissions for journals and conferences. What saddens me most is when doctoral candidates contact me and ask for ways in which they can become involved with AERA. It saddens me not because these graduate students want to become involved but because as doctoral candidates it is almost always too late in their graduate studies to become actively involved. Due to strict term limits and transitional periods, it is best that graduate students get involved with AERA during their first semester of their graduate studies.

BRE: There appears to be a lot of controversy about the state of education research—it’s quality, relevance, and accessibility. What are your thoughts on this issue?

NH: There is nothing controversial about the state of educational research. It has never been more relevant and, with the advent and proliferation of online, open-access journals, never more accessible. The controversy is that some within the Academy perceive these alternatives, and by “alternative” I mean non-printed research sources—to be substandard and of less quality than more traditional journals. As publishing—not only academic, but also in other forms—continues to evolve, I feel it would be foolish for the academic ethos to be dismissive to these trends. Academia has begun to respond (as seen in SAGE open-access journals) but publishing receives the most attention since it is through publishing that scholars receive tenure and promotion. Incredibly, MLA is just now beginning to admit that it needs to change its structure for awarding doctoral degrees in humanities programs; the median time to complete a Ph.D. in the humanities is nearly a decade (nine years). If education research and academic publishing need modification, they should begin modifying now. Furthermore, these modifications should not be perceived as controversial.

BRE: What do you see in the future of academic publishing? What role will technology play? Peer review? What role will student-run journals like BRE play? And what role *should* they play?

NH: Let me be clear: graduate students need opportunities to understand and learn how publishing works by participating in the actual process. The simplest way to gain this experience is through attempting to publish as a graduate student and by getting editorial experience working for a student-run journal like BRE. I know other universities have graduate student-run journals. I am familiar with the journals at the University of

Pennsylvania; the University of California, Los Angeles; and Harvard. But you see, these three institutions are top-tier institutions of higher education, and thus, the question becomes: ‘Where do students gain these experiences if they are not fortunate enough to have graduate student-run journals?’ Student-run and open-access journals should play the role of providing opportunities for graduate students to publish and practice publishing. This requires that they should provide graduate students opportunities to submit, review, and edit. Lastly, these publications ought to consciously create opportunities for students who would otherwise not have such opportunities (e.g., graduate students who attend smaller universities).

BRE: What is your advice to graduate students who want to learn more about publishing?

NH: My advice to students who want to learn more about publishing can be summarized in the following points (not necessarily in order of importance):

1. Read journals in which your work could be published;
2. Attend conference sessions dedicated to gaining experience in publishing;
3. Have a teachable spirit when receiving tips and pointers from veteran scholars about publishing;
4. Submit your writing to journals immediately;
5. Review manuscripts for journals and conferences;
6. Ask questions and/or join a writing group;
7. Seek out sages and scholars who could answer questions you may have about publishing; and
8. Become a student of things that will assist your publishing skills, such as acquainting yourself with Cabell’s Directories, Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports (impact factor), etc.