***\*This is an exemplar personal statement. Student gave COESA permission to use this for future students. All identifying information has been removed, such as student names, participants, year, etc.***

COESA Student Grant Application Personal Statement

AERA Conference Presentation 20 (year)

Presenting at AERA has been an academic dream of mine for a long time now. The prestige of the conference has always been intimidating, therefore when Student (PhD student in (department) at MCE) and I were accepted to present our research, I became ecstatic. Student and I presented on our study titled, (title of project).

While we have presented on some of the results of this research prior to AERA, we spent a vast amount of time analyzing our data further in order to draw more specific conclusions and implications that were revealed.

Using Elliot Eisner’s educational criticism and connoisseurship research approach, we asked three questions: 1) What are the intentions and practices of a high school teacher as he teaches English? 2) What are the intentions and practices of a teacher as he teaches English using a perceptual mode? and 3) What are student perceptions of a perceptual mode of teaching? In the presentation, we analyzed six aesthetic themes of education: CRISPA (connections, risk-taking, imagination, sensory experiences, perceptivity, and active engagement). Our participants were one teacher, Teacher, and eight students from his AP literature course at a private school in the Denver Metro area. Teacher used CRISPA to guide much of his teaching and curriculum and we collected interviews, observations, and artifacts that allowed us to explore his intentions, the execution, and the outcomes of teaching with CRISPA.

Our findings suggest that that the intentional infusion of CRISPA into lesson design and pedagogy creates the potential for deepened identification and expression of a complementary social justice curriculum.

This has implications for teachers and teacher educators who are interested in the way value systems and personal beliefs are embedded into teaching and learning. Being at AERA was overwhelming at first, with so many people and so much genius surrounding me. Reflecting on the experience, I see that it has opened new doors in terms of people that I met who want to collaborate on research. It felt like a petri dish of new research agendas. It was a humbling experience as well; recognizing the great work that so many people are doing in the field of education. I left feeling hopeful and rejuvenated. AERA (year) forced me to organize complex ideas, practice public speaking skills, and answer questions I hadn’t prepared for. We were able to connect our research to that of the other presenter on our panel, which was invigorating and exciting. AERA encouraged us to draft, revise, and submit a high-quality proposal. We then spent endless hours revising our draft in order to submit a manuscript. We learned how to edit as a team and put forth our individual assets in order to create a meaningful and rich presentation. Overall the conference boosted my momentum in my own research and heightened my hope for the future of education in our country and around the world.