

GROWING SCHOLARS CHRONICLE

FROM THE EDITORS

by Kate, Nina, and Brandie

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2020 issue of the *Growing Scholars Chronicle*, an issue we are nicknaming the Pandemic Pages. We know that the pandemic and its necessary and abrupt changes to our ways of doing and being in the world have affected us all. Several ELATE-GS members responded to an online call asking how they've been dealing with the pandemic, and their responses are on page two. Page three offers a couple of fast-approaching deadlines for publication opportunities related to COVID-19. The rest of the issue, though, we focus on celebrating the 2019 NCTE Convention and considering ongoing issues facing graduate students in English Education.

We are excited to share reflections from ELATE members about the 2019 NCTE Convention, held in Baltimore, Maryland. The focus of this year's conference centered on engaging students in the English Language Arts through Spirited Inquiry. Our goal with this Spring issue is to further engage ELATE graduate students and to welcome those new to ELATE-GS by highlighting a few of the many teaching and learning opportunities offered within the NCTE professional community.

If you have ideas to share for future issues, please email us at GrowingScholarsChronicle@gmail.com. There is a lot of valuable information in the GSC, and we hope you will find it useful and perhaps contribute to future issues!



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PANDEMIC PAGES

Teaching & Researching in Dystopia

We asked ELATE-GS members to reflect on their experiences during the pandemic: research, teaching, coursework and so on. Our hope is that by sharing each of our experiences, we all feel a little more connected, a little less overwhelmed, and a lot more like we are enough and we will be okay.

Family Matters

I am revising my dissertation in the back corner of my small duplex with three young kids mere feet away. Noise-cancelling headphones are coming in handy!

Johnny Allred, University of Arkansas

Transcribing interviews with a 22 month old who refuses to nap and a 4 month old who likes to be held has been a treat 🥰

David Premont, Purdue University

Research Revision

I just got IRB approval to work in a high school and will be doing my best via Zoom to continue the project. I look forward to sharing the process and results with you all!

Rebecca Chatham, Arizona State University

It's looking more and more like my dissertation data collection will be curtailed at 8 weeks of student teaching, which I'm concerned will weaken the richness of the data.

David Premont, Purdue University

I am having a hard time settling down to write my proposal, but several grad school friends are helping to motivate me.

Anita Dubroc, Louisiana State University

Luckily, I had already done half of my field observations, and I can do additional interviews by phone or video conference, but I'm rethinking elements of my research questions.

Brandie Bohney, Bowling Green State University

Balancing Acts

I am remembering to slow down, take it one day at a time, and ask my community for support (as well as offering any support I can give). We are all in this together.

Jen McConnel, Queen's University

Because my focus leans towards my students, my dissertation writing and job hunting have stalled so I'm learning to balance support for others and support for myself.

Karen Morris, Penn State University

As a mentor and leader (role in AETA), I am doing my best via social media, the phone, and email to support my friends and colleagues personally and professionally.

Rebecca Chatham, Arizona State University

Tempered Teaching

I must ask myself what my priorities are with my student teachers. They are trying to process remote learning for the rest of the semester, but, more than that, they are grieving a loss...and so am I.

Kelsey Jones, Penn State University

As an 8th grade teacher, I worry about my students every day. As a grad student, I am finding that the reading and online work is fair and gives me something other than the pandemic to think about.

Katie Riermersma Sluiter, Western Mich. University

Now that my school has gone online for the rest of the semester, I'm really having to balance my thoughts on what is key to the courses I'm teaching and what needs, academic and emotional, my students have.

Karen Morris, Penn State University

I miss my students and the class culture I worked hard to build with them through group work and interactive activities.

Anita Dubroc, Louisiana State University



PANDEMIC PAGES, CONTINUED

Calls & Opportunities

Because we are teaching, studying, and researching in unprecedented times, there are opportunities to respond to this global crisis in our scholarship. Below, we highlight a couple of CFPs focused on the challenges of our work at this time.

Call for Chapters



The Corona Chronicles: Necessary Narratives in Uncertain Times

Kenny Varner (UNLV), Steve Bickmore (UNLV), Danica Hays (UNLV), PG Schrader (UNLV), David Carlson (ASU), and Dorothea Anagnostopoulos (UConn)

Context: COVID 19 or Coronavirus or Corona has undoubtedly affected every facet of life for every citizen of the world. Six months ago, we had not even contemplated its name. Economic, health, labor, and social sectors have suffered tremendously during this pandemic. Education changes, quite literally, overnight. We now find ourselves in a digital landscape trying to engage with our 'new normal.' We realize that many educators from pre-schools through graduate colleges are engaging different realities than we are used to. These realities have sparked many narratives and stories some verbalized, others shared on social media, and others still communicated within our contexts of learning. As editors of this volume we wish not to lose the power of these narratives – the power to chronicle, the power to transform, the power to inspire, the power to build allyship through hardship.

This volume will chronicle how PreK-20 educators (e.g., administrators, faculty, staff, and students) are experiencing this moment at personal and/or professional levels: lessons they are learning and tales that help provide context, content, or convergence for readers. Chapters can center on issues of advocacy, diversity, equity, family, labor, technology, society, struggle, trepidation, and/or triumph. We are organizing the book into five sections:

Our Stories – narrating the trials, triumphs, and trepidation of the now
Our Process – what moving digitally/virtually is doing or not doing for us, and how we learn from it
Our Leadership – how leadership responds and/or emerges, the leadership challenges and opportunities

Our Hopes – musings about what this moment might bring in terms of change and what we hope to pay attention to
Our Commitments – doubling down on our core commitments strengthened, recommitted to, or changed in this time

Chapters: Should range from 2,000-4,000 words (< 2,000 considered; > 4,000 would require justification) Should be: personal, bold, and use genre creatively Avoid academic citations; use citations sparingly

Timeline: Send Chapters as Word Document by June 10, 2020 to: 2020covidchronicles@gmail.com Identify author/s names, affiliation/s, email address/es, phone number/s, and section of book in the subject line please put contact authors last name and section you want your chapter in Example: Varner – Our Process

Initial Decisions (with revisions if provisionally accepted) sent by June 24, 2020 Revised manuscripts with author paperwork returned by July 10, 2020 Manuscript delivered to Publisher by mid-August 2020

In Print and Available by early September, 2020
NOTE: We also welcome poetry or short forms of art that can go between sections as dividers. Send those submissions to 2020covidchronicles@gmail.com as well with the subject line as your Last Name-Art and with the name/s, affiliation/s, email address/es, and phone number/s of contributors.

DIOPRESS.COM

Announcing a Special Issue of *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*
<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/>

Writing Teacher Education in Extraordinary Times

When we began *Teaching/Writing* in 2011, we knew we had a powerful tool for teacher educators throughout the spectrum of English language arts. The journal was designed to not only have the ability to advance scholarship and practice through semi-regular academic publication cycles, but also had the potential to serve as a rapid publishing opportunity in response to exigent events.

We're all trying to – on-the-fly – ensure that our students and our teaching colleagues. We're heard anecdotally from colleagues all around North America about all the things they are doing to educate and support new and current teachers of writing. We've heard about lots of innovation, and are humbled by the amazing amount of skill, dedication, and talent that our colleagues possess.

Let's capture this and learn from it. We intend to use this issue of *Teaching/Writing* as a tool to codify and amplify those voices, not only to provide an image of the work as it happened in an unprecedented moment, but also to provide a means for those voices to teach and guide future generations of writing teacher educators.

So, here we are: *We seek narratives from writing teacher educators on how they have adjusted their classes, programs, and experiences in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.* We're looking to publish an expansive issue that includes voices from all types of institutions and all sort of roles, including

- English language arts methods instructors describing how they are adapting their classes to remote instruction
- Field instructors, student teachers, cooperating teachers, program managers, and others on the ways they are articulating field experiences in writing and language
- First-year writing directors and faculty on how they have adjusted their programs, pedagogies, and support and training systems for graduate students, adjuncts, and others
- National Writing Project (NWP) site directors and teacher consultants on how they are maintaining contact and support for classroom teachers.
- And more! Any others who are involved in the training, education, and support of writing teachers in all settings. If you have something to share, bring it on.

Really, we want to find out what you've done, why you did it, and how it went (or is going). Success stories are great, as are those that show challenges and failures. We've had mixed success ourselves, so we'll both be contributing as well.

Let's keep these fairly short – say, **under 2000 words or so for each contribution.** Our hope is to include many voices and learn from all of their processes, plans, and decisions. We're particularly interested in how each of us worked to maintain their objectives and goals while making adjustments. We also encourage collaborative pieces, and articles that include voice of students and others.

You can submit your contribution via our online system at <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/> by June 1, 2020.

Please address the following general perspectives in your contribution, but feel free to interpret these concepts broadly:

- Some contextual background on you, your programs, classes, and institution
- Your story – what you did, how you came to decisions, what you did and how it went
- Takeaways and Ideas for others

These can be in the form of a personal narrative, but if you cite sources, feel free to use either APA or MLA formatting for your piece.

We will read and edit each piece, but plan on publishing all contributions that meet our professional and ethical standards. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like feedback on an idea.

Jonathan Bush (Jonathan.bush@wmich.edu)
 Erinn Bentlev (erinn@columbusstate.edu). Co-Editors



NCTE REVIEW: WHY ELATE?

Benefits of Attending ELATE Events

Why attend ELATE and ELATE-GS events at NCTE? Four of the ELATE-GS board members explain what they appreciate about a few of these special events.

Membership Meetings & Social Events

Since I've started my PhD program, I've been slowly learning my way around the ELATE community. I was introduced to the graduate strand by Chea Parton and encouraged to take a more active role by Mandie Dunn. Both of these women showed me how to begin meeting people and building relationships with like-minded colleagues at different institutions. The GS-Business Meeting and Social Event are lovely formal and informal opportunities to make connections. I also started going to the ELATE membership meeting and social hour. The free drink and snacks are definitely nice, but the more exciting aspects of this session are the job announcements made by faculty members that may not even be posted yet. This is also a lovely opportunity to make connections with faculty members whose research you have read and loved!

Stacia L. Long, University of Georgia

Commission Meetings (see Page 5)

One of my favorite parts of ELATE is attending the commission meetings during the NCTE and ELATE conferences. These meetings have been great opportunities to get to know professors doing work in fields I'm interested in researching and to hear about possible future collaborations. I definitely felt intimidated and unsure the first time I attended one of these meetings as a graduate student, but that feeling quickly dissipated as everyone was so open and welcoming. I truly felt that my perspective was valued. Beyond these meetings, all other ELATE-sponsored events—from

sessions to social hours—have been friendly spaces for me as a graduate student. I can't recommend ELATE enough!

Nina Schoonover, North Carolina State University

Community & Opportunity

After deciding to leave the high school English classroom and pursue a doctoral degree, I found myself swimming in uncharted territory. Although I always had great support from faculty and other graduate students at my institution, I felt isolated and unsure how to navigate life as a graduate student, researcher, and fledgling English educator. At the encouragement of a member of ELATE, I wandered into an ELATE-GS business meeting a few years ago and remember feeling like I belonged, like I had found a group of people with whom I could relate, commiserate, and collaborate. As I gained confidence as an English educator, I found myself becoming increasingly integrated into the ELATE community. I participated in the ELATE conference last year in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and was amazed at the strong group of people who truly care about and work tirelessly to improve English education. With them, I invite you to join ELATE! Take advantage of the opportunities the organization provides, and find your home—I know I have.

Johnny Allred, University of Arkansas

L. Ramon Veal Research Seminar

ELATE is one of my most valuable connections to the English education world. Through ELATE-GS, I learned of the Veal Seminar, which I applied to and participated in last year at NCTE. The seminar pairs graduate students with experienced English education scholars to receive targeted commentary on their in-progress research. Not only was I able to get valuable feedback from a trusted peer and senior scholar in the field on the initial structure of my dissertation research, I was also contributing to the progress and investment in English education scholarship that ELATE encourages. It was a fantastic opportunity!

Brandie Bohney, Bowling Green State University



ELATE COMMISSIONS

COMMISSION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Co-chairs

- Amy Vetter, UNC-Greensboro
- Melissa Schieble, Hunter College
CUNY
- Terri Rodrigues, College of St.
Benedict

COMMISSION ON DIGITAL LITERACIES IN TEACHER EDUCATION (D-LITE)

Co-chairs

- Nicole Damico, University of
Central Florida
- Lauren Zucker, Fordham University

COMMISSION ON THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF ADOLESCENT LITERATURE

Co-chairs

- Alice Hays, California State
University-Bakersfield
- Steffany Comfort Maher, Western
Michigan University
- Victor Malo-Juvera, UNC-
Wilmington

COMMISSION ON THE TEACHING OF POETRY

Co-chairs

- Bonner Slayton, Moore-Norman
Tech Center
- Danny Wade, Washburn University

COMMISSION ON ENGLISH METHODS TEACHING AND LEARNING

Co-chairs

- Jessica Gallo, University of Nevada-
Reno
- Christopher Parsons, Keene State
College

COMMISSION ON WRITING TEACHER EDUCATION

Co-chairs:

- Christine Dawson, Siena College
- Shauna Wight, Southeast Missouri
State University, Cape Girardeau

COMMISSION ON ARTS AND LITERACIES

Co-chairs

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University
- Michelle Zoss, Georgia State
University-Atlanta

COMMISSION ON DISMANTLING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Co-chairs

- David E. Kirkland, New York
University
- sj Miller, University of Wisconsin-
Madison

COMMISSION TO SUPPORT EARLY CAREER ELA TEACHERS

Co-chairs

- Anna J. Small Roseboro, NBCT,
Grand Rapids
- Claudia Marschall, Buffalo, NY

COMMISSION ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LITERACIES

Co-chairs

- Tracey T. Flores, University of
Texas at Austin
- Laura Gonzales, University of Texas
at El Paso

COMMISSION ON EVERYDAY ADVOCACY

Chair

- Cathy Fleischer, Eastern Michigan
University
- Sarah Hochstetler, Illinois State
University

COMMISSION ON THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

Co-chairs

- Sheridan Blau, Teachers College,
Columbia University
- Patricia Stock, Michigan State
University

COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN ENGLISH EDUCATION (c3c3)

Co-chairs

- Russell Mayo, University of Illinois
at Chicago
- Rich Novack, Teachers College,
Columbia University

Interested in joining one of these commissions? Look for the scheduled ELATE commission meetings at the annual NCTE conference or contact the chairs listed above for more information.



NCTE SESSION REVIEWS

Anita Dubroc, **Louisiana State University**



SESSION: K.36

Women Revealed: The Sonnet from Renaissance to Women Poets of the Harlem Renaissance

Chair: Peggy O'Brien (Folger Shakespeare Library)

Presenters:

- Teri Cross Davis (Folger Shakespeare Library), Hayes Davis (Sidwell Friends School), Corinne Viglietta (Folger Shakespeare Library)

I was thrilled to be able to find a spot to listen to their engaging presentation. (It was standing room only, so I got there early for a good seat!) The presenters shared several influential Renaissance women who were “Shakespeare’s sisters,” the female poet laureates of their time. Poetry from Mary Sidney, sister of Philip Sidney, and Lady Mary Wroth, writer of “Crown of Sonnets” were analyzed to connect the sonnets’ themes. From American literature, the United States’ first published female poet, Anne Bradstreet’s, poem “To My Dear and Loving Husband” was analyzed and compared to Phyllis Wheatley, the first black female published poet published in the United States. Wheatley’s poetry connected to Alice Dunbar’s “I Sit and Sew” and Gwendolyn Bennett’s “Sonnet 1.”

I truly enjoyed that the presenters shared a different approach to teaching poetry. They recommended having students research modern sonnet poets who are adapting the sonnet form. I appreciated that they traced women’s voices and lives using the sonnet, especially as few women poets were acknowledged publicly through much of history.

Cindi Koudelka, Judson University

SESSION: N.01

Hear Us, Trust Us: Student-Directed Inquiry That Spirited a Year of Community and Curiosity

Chair: Sarah Donovan (Oklahoma State University)

Keynote: Padma Venkatraman, author/illustrator, Penguin/Random House



The most amazing thing about this session is that it was led by seventh-grade students. Dr. Donovan organized an opportunity for a group of adolescents to not only submit a proposal to NCTE but to develop it as a full session in which they led individual roundtables, introduced the keynote speaker, and ended with a heartfelt thanks. The students who traveled from a Chicago suburb were articulate and well-prepared as they shared their research on various subjects from gradeless classrooms to choice reading. It was a delight to hear from the students about their experiences rather than an adult merely describing inquiry learning. The biggest takeaway of the session was the power of inquiry and action research for adolescents’ critical literacy development. The students handled adults’ questions with intelligence and depth, demonstrating their knowledge and the agency they had gained by participating with inquiry research. It was refreshing to see adolescents positioned as assets and valued as equals in their own learning.

Schuyler Hunt, **George Washington University**



SESSION: L.19

The Case for Curious Feedback

Presenters:

- Patty McGee, Kayisha Edwards, Shannon Webster, Matthew Johnson, Dave Stuart, Jr.

Providing meaningful feedback to every student that we teach can seem like a daunting task, especially for pre-service teachers. How do we, as educators, provide feedback in ways that are consistently constructive, productive, and useful? The presenters of this session called for an integration of feedback and genuine curiosity as a way for educators to approach this classroom practice. By approaching feedback with an inquiring mind, this panel shared readily applicable strategies for its integration into classrooms. The presenters’ wide range of experiences, from elementary school through high school, allowed them to demonstrate feedback in a variety of contexts. While each panelist presented different information, calling on their own experience with adopting inquiry into their feedback process, they structured the session by building off of each other to create a coherent definition of curious feedback.

What stuck with me most from this session was the call to build a “culture of why” in our classrooms. Because *why* often requires a degree of personal vulnerability to answer, educators must work to build classroom communities that value these questions. I would recommend reaching out to any or all of the panelists if you are just starting to explore feedback in your classroom or if you are looking to refresh your current feedback practice in a meaningful way.



Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of the NCTE



ALAN WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

Reflections on ALAN 2019 from first-time attendee

Rebecca Chatham, Arizona State University

The ALAN Workshop 2019 in Baltimore was nothing like I thought it would be. I had seen pictures of it: stacks of books, smiling faces, bright overhead lighting. I had even heard it via Instagram live and videos on Facebook, so I had the buzz of excited teachers in my mind. And I knew it was called a workshop, so I expected a lot of interaction, moving around, and talking. And I did experience all of the above...in about the first hour. Then, it gets quiet, and that's when the real work begins.

ALAN is a workshop, but not the kind I had ever been to before. Author after author after author joins us and workshops their book for us. They tell us the themes, their inspirations, their hopes and dreams for their books and characters. They answer questions. The people behind the scenes at ALAN select a broad range of authors for the meeting and create the schedule, the panels, and the questions. And, though it is a lot of sitting and listening and taking notes, when us teachers (and librarians) walk away, we know the background of more than 50 Young Adult novels that we can immediately book-talk and put in the hands of students.

The workshop is designed so that people can come and go throughout the day, and the vibe is very different from NCTE. While NCTE is a constant buzz and 1000s of people and noise and chaos, ALAN is more muted as people pay close attention to the authors.

The Assembly on Literature for Adolescents for NCTE (ALAN) has a big presence at every annual NCTE Conference with the Saturday ALAN Breakfast, Sunday evening reception, and two-day Workshop which takes place on Monday and Tuesday following the NCTE Conference. If you have an interest in young adult literature (YAL), including reading, teaching, or researching YAL, then the ALAN Workshop is the place for you.

There are far fewer people: just those of us who make Young Adult Literature our hobby and our business. It is not at all chaotic, except in the beginning when we get THE BOOKS!

As I entered the workshop, I got in line with dozens of other excited attendees to get my book box. After that, it was just a matter of finding my people and my spot in the hall, and then, work. And, though it wasn't what I thought it would be, it was a powerful experience to be in a room with 100s of people whose passion for reading and reading YAL matches (and exceeds!) mine.

ALAN: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR 2020

by Kristina Bybee, Arizona State University

ALAN events at NCTE

Every year, ALAN hosts a Saturday ticketed breakfast during the NCTE Conference. The breakfast provides a time and space for ALAN members to gather for important news and announcements of ALAN-sponsored award winners. ALAN also awards four different types of grants to teachers and researchers who are dedicated to YAL teaching and scholarship.



What happens at the ALAN Workshop?

The workshop begins early Monday morning as eager ELA teachers, librarians, and other educators line up outside the conference room for their box of books. With their enormous boxes in hand, they rush inside to the long tables set up that face the front of the room. Next, attendees can unpack their boxes and stack their books on the table. This is an important part of the workshop because it provides an opportunity not only to peruse the books, but also to plan for the author book talks that are the central feature of the workshop. Also, attendees are known to compare their stacks (and maybe engage in an exchange or two...shhhh) to their friends and neighbors--not everyone receives exactly the same books.

What's new at the ALAN Workshop?

Included in the cost of the ALAN Workshop is the Sunday evening reception of ALAN officers, attendees, and Young Adult authors. The 2019 Workshop included a new format for the reception that consisted of tables set up for the authors so that they could sign book plates or just chat and take photos with attendees. The Sunday evening bookplates signing replaces a previous ALAN tradition of authors signing their books immediately following their presentation at the workshop. This change allows attendees to remain in the conference hall rather than waiting in line to have their books signed during the workshop. Not only does this format benefit more introverted teachers who might hesitate to approach an author having a conversation; it also benefits the authors who are less well known, allowing them to meet more teachers because of how everyone lines up for the signings.

The “must-do” list for the ALAN Workshop

Priorities for attendees often include meeting YAL authors, networking with other YAL educators, and learning all about the new YAL releases from the writers themselves. Conserve your energy! Even though you don't move from room-to-room throughout the day like you do at NCTE, there is still a lot to do including listening to discussions and attending one or more of the mid-day sessions offered by ALAN attendees and YA authors. Finally, you should be prepared to transport your box of books either to your hotel, the shipping outlet just outside the conference hall, or to a nearby post office so that you can get the books home and into the hands of your students (or yourself!).

What's happening at ALAN 2020 in Denver?

New ALAN President Ricki Ginsberg has announced the theme of this year's workshop is “Book Brave: Using YAL to Rethink Spaces Together.” Since there are a limited number of seats for the 2-day workshop it is recommended that you register early to ensure your seat and your box of books. Register for the ALAN Workshop 2020 at the ALAN website: <http://www.alan-ya.org/>

THE FUTURE IS NOW INTERVIEW WITH KELSEY METCALF

Kelsey Metcalf is a graduating senior at North Carolina State University studying Middle Grades English Language Arts and Social Studies Education. She student taught in a 6th grade ELA classroom and plans to start teaching this Fall. She attended NCTE in Baltimore, MD, and presented in the Future is Now, a session dedicated to pre-service teachers. She shared her experience with us here.

Kelsey Metcalf

North Carolina State University
B.A. Middle Grades ELA & Social
Studies Education
Class of 2020



Describe your overall experience at the NCTE Convention in Baltimore, MD.

It was awesome having the chance to go and be at the NCTE Convention this past November. Not only were the speakers and authors incredible, but the opportunity to talk with other teachers and to receive their wisdom and advice was priceless. Also, I was blown away by the amount of free materials and resources made available to me as a preservice teacher. Even without a teaching degree, I was well respected by other NCTE members! Although many of the seminars sounded like my courses at NC State, it was reassuring to hear that I am learning the most up-to-date strategies and methods at NC State! Thank you, College of Education!

How do you see The Future is Now moving your teacher research forward?

The Future is Now opened my eyes to the additional opportunities I have as a teacher -- not only can I have an impact on my students, but I can share what I learn with other educators and inspire change in their classrooms too! Honestly, I never thought "research" could be a part of my career as a teacher, but The Future is Now helped me realize that teaching truly is all about lifelong learning.

What teaching tools or ideas did you bring home to use in your classroom?

I received multiple novels and discussion question guides. I also was given access to Pearson's curriculum and teaching resources for 6th-8th grade ELA. In regards to ideas, the importance of having mirror books in my classroom was one I was given and reminded of often. Also, the significance of talking about societal problems with students, that they may or may not have faced, was highlighted during a seminar that introduced an entire, successful, 8th grade unit which focused on gun violence through an empathetic lens. It was SO cool!

What are you most looking forward to in your first year?

I was given the opportunity to grow closer with my peers from my cohort as well as fellow presenters at The Future is Now segment. Fun fact, I ran into one of the presenters from my table at The Future is Now in Atlanta over New Year's at a Christian conference called Passion. We literally bumped into each other on the MARTA, it was awesome seeing a familiar face before student teaching began!

Do you plan to attend NCTE in the future?

I'd say year 3, 4, or 5 of teaching I'd go back and attend NCTE. This is so I could learn about the latest research and resources and keep teaching/learning relevant.



Image provided courtesy of the author.

GRADUATE STUDENT FEATURE: BATTLING IMPOSTOR SYNDROME



by *Jenise Gorman*

The feeling of not being good enough, even after acceptance letters into programs and many accolades, makes one feel a sense of rushing anxiety. This feeling was especially evident after being accepted into my doctoral program. My GRE score and undergraduate GPA did not help me get in to the program. Thankfully, my GPA from my masters, my work experience, and my letters of recommendations were enough to get the congratulations letter. After receiving my letter, I met with my advisor to create a road map of what the program was going to be like for me. During this meeting, my advisor brought up my low GRE scores and my terrible GPA from undergrad: this was not how I wanted to start the program. Having to explain to my advisor that I am a different person than the girl from my early twenties made me question if I should start this road toward my Ph.D.

I have always felt like getting my Ph.D. was something that I needed to do in order to feel accomplished and smart enough, which are all the wrong reasons for getting a higher degree. My first class in the program was Statistics, and math is not my strongest subject. I was unsure of how long I was going to last and started to stress out because I felt like an imposter. This class was exhausting and stretched my brain in ways that I did not think it could. At first, I looked at all the assignments and could not fathom how I was going to learn and excel in the many assignments ahead. After taking a few deep breaths, I looked at all the assignments and planned my mini-semester. I took one assignment at a time instead of trying to do too much at once, and this made the class more manageable. Even after finishing the class with an A, I still had a difficult time giving myself credit for my 4.0 GPA in my first semester as a doctoral student.

As I entered my fall semester, I meticulously organized my schedule of working full-time, coaching cheer, taking classes, being a mother to a toddler, and being a wife. As I looked at my fall schedule, I realized that I had zero time for myself; this created a lot of anxiety. I walked into my class every Thursday night and sat next to people who I felt were smarter and better than me; I felt like I was not worthy enough to be in the program. It was not until a conversation that I had with my husband about what I was doing and why that I realized I was exactly where I needed to be. I had to stop comparing myself with others, surround myself with a support group of people in my program, and maintain a growth mindset. Having imposter syndrome is real, yet something that can be mitigated with the right mindset and support system.



GRADUATE STUDENT FEATURE: BATTLING IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

by Erika Watts

As I entered my first class as a doctoral student, I immediately felt out of place. All of these students were older than me, had more experience than me, and were more qualified to be there. At any moment, I felt like someone was going to yell that I was not a real student there and my admission was not valid. I couldn't be any more than an English teacher in my mind, if I was even that some days. I often think someone is going to tell me I am not qualified to teach my content on the days I am feeling hard on myself. Imposter syndrome has always plagued me since I graduated with my undergraduate degree and I worry it always will. As a woman in graduate studies, I feel as though I do not belong because I have always seen men in the roles I am pursuing, even if education is a highly female-dominated career. However, the more I work in my program, the more I know that I can overcome this imposter syndrome and shine in my own classroom and my program.

For the longest time, I believed I was the only one who felt alone and lacked confidence in my career. I found what helped me the most was speaking to others in my program and being upfront in my feelings. This allowed others to let their guard down and express their concerns of imposter syndrome as well. In a graduate program where the stakes are higher and the competition is on, it is easy to lose the idea of college being a place to share ideas freely; "While many perceive the college campus as an oasis of tranquility where intellectual communities strive to seek and share knowledge in a supportive environment the reality in most cases is markedly different," (Parkman, 2016, p. 53) and this is due to the pressure to do one's best. It can often feel as though we are pitted against each other instead of in an area for intellectual conversation when we consider the job market and wanting to shine the brightest to be seen as the best. "The imposter syndrome is nurtured within the discourse of academic environments," (Watson & Betts, 2010, p. 6) and with the drive to constantly be the best, it is easy for a student to feel as though he or she is not good enough to even be in the program in the first place. While this feeling will be prominent, talking to others and voicing concerns will help with confidence. It truly does make a world of a difference to know that the feelings are justified and others feel the same way. This sense of camaraderie in a program can make a person feel that he or she does belong in the program and is not the imposter by any means.

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- W. B. Yeats

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