

# GROWING SCHOLARS CHRONICLE

Conference on English Education-Graduate Strand

Fall 2017, Issue 7

## CONFERENCE ON ENGLISH EDUCATION @ NCTE 2017

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17

**CEE Luncheon**, 12:00 PM - 1:45 PM

**D. 49 - CEE Commission Meetings 1**  
2:30 PM - 3:15 PM

**E.04 - CEE Membership Meeting &  
Social Hour**, 3:30 - 4:45 PM

**CEE-GS Business Meeting & Dinner\***  
5:30 - 8:00 PM

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18

**G.03 - Critical Issues in English  
Education: Research by CEE  
Research Initiative Award Winners**,  
12:00 - 1:15 PM

**J.05\* Sharing Our Voices: Preparing  
Teacher Educators for Today,  
Tomorrow, Forever**, 4:30 - 5:45 PM

**J.46 - CEE Commission Meetings 2**,  
4:30 - 5:45 PM

### SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19

**K.03\* The Future is Now: Exploring  
21st-Century Teaching Ideas with  
the Next Generation of English  
Teachers**, 8:00 - 9:15 AM

\*Denotes session sponsored by CEE -  
Graduate Strand (CEE-GS)

## From the New Editors of the *Growing Scholars Chronicle*

*Unity-in-diversity.* We think this is a fitting motto for who we are and a vision for what we hope this publication represents. As editors of the CEE's *Growing Scholars Chronicle* (GSC), the four of us come from a variety of backgrounds, institutions, and academic research interests; yet we all share a deep interest in pedagogy and writing. Our primary aim as editors of the GSC is to use this forum as a way of communicating with graduate students interested in English Education from across the US. Further, we seek to engage more voices from various contexts, spaces, and disciplines within the fields of literacy and education. In the end, we hope that this biannual publication becomes a thoughtful, diverse, democratic commons which will offer a voice to and helpful advice for graduate students in English Education. In this, our first issue as editors of the GSC, you will find what we intend to be a number of recurring columns, topics, and features. We hope you find them interesting and helpful. If so, please keep reading—and we urge you to consider contributing to the next issue! If you find that we are missing anything, please do not hesitate to reach out to us about it.

Katie Alford, University of Arizona  
Chris Bass, University of Chicago, Illinois  
Amber Jensen, George Mason University  
Russell Mayo, University of Chicago, Illinois

## Included in this Issue

<b>CEE 2017 Conference Recap</b> Chris Bass	2
<b>Surviving and Thriving in your First Year as Tenure-Track Faculty</b> Michelle Falter	4
<b>CFP: Articles for CEE-GS Newsletter</b>	7
<b>Methods Cheat Sheet: Book Recommendations</b>	8
<b>Advice for Grad Students: Publishing in Academia</b>	10
<b>Accomplishments and Accolades of CEE-GS Members</b>	12
<b>Blogger's Corner: "Oversharing in Writing Workshop"</b> Sarah Donovan, Ethical ELA	13
<b>Upcoming Conferences</b>	15
<b>CEE Commissions</b>	16

# CEE 2017 Conference Recap

By Chris Bass  
University of Chicago - Illinois

The 2017 CEE Summer Conference convened at The Ohio State University for four days of presentations, discussions, and community building all of which focused on the theme (Com)Passionate English Education. The conference was an immersive experience for the attendees who engaged in dynamic conversations during the varying formal sessions and continued them into the dorms, dining halls, throughout the campus, and into the evening events along North High Street in Columbus.

The conference officially began with a rousing opening plenary. Mollie Blackburn, the conference committee chair, and NCTE President Susan Houser welcomed the conference guests. Both leaders spoke about the relevance of the conference's theme and encouraged the audience to reflect on (Com)Passionate forms of English education. The theme was extended into an introductory conversation facilitated by Anne Elrod Whitney. This conversation further defined the conference's theme and posed questions to consider throughout the four days.

The Keynote speaker, Valerie Kinloch, opened the first full day with her presentation entitled "Race, Justice, and Engagement: Examining Humanizing and (Com)Passionate Approaches to English Education." She shared research on race, justice, and community engagement amongst young people in urban communities. She advocated for an approach to English education that encourages future teachers to implement and sustain



humanizing and (com)passionate approaches to teaching. The presentation included research that revealed the agentive power of many students, which is often overlooked and undervalued by standardized models of education.

For participants, engaging conversations extended beyond the plenary sessions and into the formal breakout sessions that explored research applicable to English Educators. These sessions ranged from panel discussions to roundtable conversations and included established scholars in the field of English education, assistant professors, and graduate students. There was a noticeable atmosphere of collaboration; Scholars with varying backgrounds were able to share insights on issues most urgent to our field..

There was a moment of activism when Dr. Allen Webb, from Western Michigan University, set up colorful banners outside the main Dining Hall. The banners functioned as an informative gallery walk into the climate future—each panel portrayed the impact of the Earth's rising temperature. Volunteers distributed flyers that explained the banner's images. Webb's goal was to bring attention to the importance of the Paris Climate Accord while also starting conversations about how we can teach climate change in the ELA classroom.

## CEE 2017 Conference Recap (continued)

Greg Michie, a Chicago Public School middle grades teacher and the Friday evening keynote speaker, shared stories from his middle school students. The presentation, "Same as it Never Was: A Teacher's Search for Meaning," encouraged teacher educators to create the space for student stories in the classroom. He shared stories written by his students. Michie argued that such work provokes compassion amongst educators, students, community members, and policy makers.



After the Friday plenary session, the CEE Graduate Strand had a lively social event at the RAM Restaurant and Brewery. The CEE-GS dinner brought together scholars from universities throughout the country. The informal atmosphere led to stories about the graduate student experience and tips for navigating the lengthy Ph.D. process.

Marcelle Haddix was the final Keynote speaker. Her presentation, "Writing Our Lives as a Space of Healing in Troubling Times," explored the violence and trauma that young people face outside of the classrooms. She suggested that schools and communities must be better prepared to help students deal with their everyday experiences. Moreover, she shared her research at Writing Our Lives, a youth literacy project outside of Syracuse, New York. This project engages young writers, teachers, parents, artists, and community members in cultivating a healing space that values authentic literacy practices.

On the last day of the biennial conference, CEE-GS organized a series of sessions that filled the morning agenda. Each session encouraged conversations around topics related to the graduate student experience: how to navigate expectations for academic publishing; general advice for the job search; and the process for getting external grants and funding. The sessions were filled with tips and details that were delivered from academics with experience related to the respective topics.

Upcoming editions of the CEE-GS Chronicle will have articles dedicated to the information shared at several of these sessions. In this edition, Amber Jensen curates some key advice about academic publishing.

Overall, the CEE Summer Conference was another successful professional experience supported by the NCTE. The conference planning committee, Amy Piotrowski, David Schaafsma, Melanie Shoffner, and Anne Elrod Whitney, deserve recognition for their efforts in putting together a dynamic conference.



We look forward to connecting with everyone at the CEE Summer Conference in 2019!

# Putting your Transition Lenses On: Surviving and Thriving in Your First Year as Tenure-Track Faculty



By Michelle Falter  
North Carolina State University  
mfalter@ncsu.edu

When I was approached to write this article about the first year of a faculty position, I was of course honored that someone cared what I had to say (I still feel like an imposter most days!). A year ago I was entering my first year as a tenure-track faculty member at North Carolina State University, a research intensive land grant university, after successfully completing my PhD at the University of Georgia, another research intensive university. I have had a wonderful first year as an assistant professor of English Education and I hope that as you make the transition from graduate student to faculty member, you will too.

As I pondered what wisdom I could give you about how to maneuver your first year as a faculty member, I happened to be talking with a person who wore transition lens glasses. If you are not familiar with these type of glasses, the lens changes or transitions from shaded to clear depending on whether you are in a place with bright sunlight or inside a building with regular lights. The thing about transition lenses is that they never seem to transition fully to clear, or at the very least, they take a long time to transition to clear. They always seem a little shaded. Your first year of being a faculty member is a little bit like those transition lenses. Your experience will always be shaded by



your preparation and experiences you had as a graduate student, and it takes time to get clarity. I was fortunate enough to have worked with faculty at the University of Georgia that gave their students experiences, opportunities, and general wisdom on how to do this job. Part of why I feel I had a successful year was that I already had been engaging in activities that I do as a faculty member when I was a PhD student. For example, I was part of multiple different research projects, I was in writing groups, I had leadership positions within different graduate organizations, I reviewed for journals, I attended different meetings, and taught classes. I still do all of these things. I think the biggest difference is that I now have more autonomy over those activities.

Regardless of whether you have been blessed to have the mentorship and support I had as a graduate student, there are a lot of things you can do to make your first year a great one. Here are ten things I learned as I transitioned from graduate student to faculty member:

- 1. They call it orientation, but it really should be called disorientation.** At the start of the semester (or in some cases, before the semester is officially in session) you will be scheduled to the brim with orientations from the University level, the College level, the Department level, and even the Program or Degree level. All of them are very helpful (or at least that is their intention), but because there is a lot of information

# First Year as Tenure-Track Faculty (continued)

thrown at you within a relatively small amount of time, it often can feel overwhelming and disorienting. The biggest advice is to take notes but also take breaks. Find a buddy that is also new that you can commiserate with. Although I was in information overload, I met some other new professors during this time from all across the university and I still meet up with them now. It's nice to have another person that is going through the same things as you.

## 2. Culture shock will likely happen.

Maybe you will be fortunate enough to land a job in a location that you currently live in or have lived in before. That was not the case for me, and probably most people. You take the job you can get. Even if your job is located in the most wonderful place to live, it is completely normal to go through some sort of culture shock. I have moved many times in my life both in the US and to foreign countries, so I sort of know the drill. Your first year is not a great year to judge whether or not you like a place. You are both equally in a honeymoon phase where everything is new and great, but also in a semi-depressed state where you are having to meet new friends, establish new routines, and learn a lot of things over again. If you are moving with your family, this can also be true for them too. Moving shocks your system. Sometimes it can even bring on depression, anxiety, and loneliness. But know you are not alone! I can say that being a part of the NCTE and CEE family, and relying on my graduate school friends who are only a phone call away, really helped my first year. Just know that all of this is normal. You just have to give the transition time.

**3. Seek out a mentor(s) and ask questions.** You may be lucky enough to be at a university that has a formal mentor program. If you are, that's great! But, have no fear if you aren't. Regardless of whether you are assigned a mentor, I found it helpful, as a new faculty member, to seek

out someone or some people for guidance. I have had many mentors this past year, some assigned to me, and some that just naturally developed. There are a lot of institutional norms and history that there is no way that I would know or understand without my mentors. I also rely on them to give me advice on how to handle situations that arise. I have mentors in a lot of different ways: some of my mentors are in my department, but some are not. Getting different perspectives is helpful. I also have mentors through NCTE/CEE that I can go to for help in navigating this career, outside of the day to day activities at my university. I am indebted to many people who have offered guidance this past year and kept me sane.

**4. Be a good listener.** There is an old maxim that says, "Your ears will never get you in trouble." I think as a brand new professor I really tried to be someone who listened more than spoke. This does not mean that I was a mute this past year. However, I cannot pretend to understand things like the history of the department, why classes are scheduled oddly, etc. It is tempting as a new person to say, well at so-and-so we did it this way. And, I have been guilty from time to time saying that. But for the most part, I have tried to listen and learn from my colleagues, to try to understand the norms and politics of my new place. I feel like going into my second year, I now have the knowledge needed to move beyond listening to helping my colleagues enact changes. I have built in the time over my first year to form relationships with my colleagues so that they want to listen to me, too.

# First Year as Tenure-Track Faculty (continued)

**5. Get on a schedule.** It is no joke when I say that meetings can take over every spare moment of your day. What I have found that helped me the most was creating a set schedule for myself and carving out/blocking out times that are set aside for writing and research work. Since research and writing are an expectation of the job, I needed to make sure I didn't let it fall to the wayside. In my calendar, I will literally create a meeting time with myself (e.g. Meeting with Michelle) and block out a huge chunk of time to get my writing done. When people ask me to meet for a variety of reasons, I do not schedule meetings (no matter how easy it would be to do so) in that designated writing time. I will tell people, I cannot meet. I have a meeting. And this is true. I work best by blocking out large chunks of time one or two days a week to write. You might work better by blocking out an hour every day at a set time. Do what works for you!

**6. Find ways to hold yourself accountable.** Even if I block out time to write, it is easy to find excuses not to write. Sometimes writing can feel like, well, work. Every other aspect of our job has some level of outside accountability. Our students expect that we show up to class, that we return their graded assignments in a timely matter, that we complete task x,y,z for that committee meeting. But, writing and research is a little different. No one is going to bug you, for the most part, if you didn't transcribe those audio files, code that data, or write the methods section of that new paper. So, finding ways to hold yourself accountable for getting this work done is imperative, especially since getting tenure or even reappointed to your position is dependent upon your productivity in this area. This past year, I was part of a small group of scholars that met every other week to set research/writing goals to complete before we meet again. The idea is that if

we meet with each other we are more likely to complete the goals we have set. I have found this to be very helpful to me, as I didn't want to be the one person in the group who didn't complete their goals! This year, myself and three other early career assistant professors have formed a virtual writing group where we share writing with each other every 6 week for critical feedback. Both of these types of groups have helped me stay productive and moving my scholarship forward.

**7. Talk with your department chair.** One of the best things I did this past year was developing a relationship with my department chair. Although this seems fairly obvious, your department chair can either be super helpful to you or they can be your worst enemy. I don't know about you, but I would rather know that my department head had my back. They are truly someone who can help you and make your time as a faculty member easier. One thing they can help you navigate is understanding the expectations of junior faculty members in your department and college. I have been able to ask my department chair about whether I need to say yes to certain committees, etc, and how to navigate the politics of my department.

**8. Understand what it takes to move forward.** One of the most important things you need to do your first year is find out the rules, regulations, and even unwritten but expected practices for moving forward in your career. When I interviewed for the job, I know I definitely asked about tenure and promotion, but now that I have the job it was even more important that I understood the fine print. Each university does their process a little differently. For example, here at NC State we write our own job descriptions called an SME (Statement of Mutual Expectations). This document outlines what percentage of workload is for scholarship, service, extension, and teaching, etc. This document also is used to help determine if I will be reappointed (rehired) during

## First Year as Tenure-Track Faculty (continued)

my 3rd year review, and will also help facilitate discussions of whether or not I will be tenured and promoted in year 6. Things such as how many publications and of what caliber journal they need to come from are all things that I have attempted to get to the bottom of this past year. I wanted to know exactly what the university and department expect of me so I can make sure I am successful.

### 9. Establish a positive reputation.

This might also be an obvious one, but I think that is important that your first year you find a way to make yourself known, in a positive way. Don't blend into the background. How you establish a positive reputation, though, is up to you. I found an opportunity to put myself out there through working on a large community organized event. I also am a shameless self-promoter. I have no problem letting others know about the work I am doing. So, find your opportunity, and make sure that the work you do and the way you interact with others makes people say, "Do you know \_\_\_\_? Isn't she/he awesome!" I can say confidently that I know my Dean knows who I am, knows the work I am doing, and has positive things to say about me. And, that's the way I like it.

**10. Give yourself permission to not do work.** This might be an odd piece of advice to end on, but I truly believe that the most productive and happiest people are those that allow for time away from work. After coming off of working on a dissertation for over a year, at first it sort of felt weird to have free time. But, then, I realized, "Hey, this is normal! You are allowed to have a life again!" I joke, but I am also dead serious. Sometimes you just need a reminder that we are human beings, not robots at the will of the university. Of course you may have late nights and have to work on the weekends, but I have really tried to carve out me time. We have worked hard to earn this PhD, and we deserve some time to enjoy it too!

# CFP

## SEEKING SUBMISSIONS for the next issue of Growing Scholars Chronicle

**Did you present at NCTE this year? Are you trying something new in your methods class? Do you have advice to share?** The Growing Scholars Chronicle is seeking contributions by CEE-GS members (including early career professors!) for our next issue.

### Requested Submissions

- **Feature articles** (800 - 1,200 words). You may submit manuscripts on any topic that will appeal to graduate students of English Education. Formats include articles, essays, research, art, creative writing, multi-modal etc.
- **Book reviews** (75 - 100 words) of texts used in methods courses. These should follow annotated bibliography format.
- **Advice for graduate students** (varying length, no more than 2,000 words) regarding aspects of graduate school including, but not limited to: writing, collaboration, submitting proposals, time management, reference management, and working with professors on or off campus.
- **Member accolades:** If something great is happening, we want to hear about it!

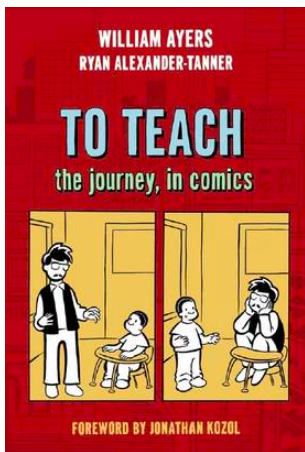
**Submit:** [growingscholarschronicle@gmail.com](mailto:growingscholarschronicle@gmail.com) in Google Doc or Word Doc. Include your name and university affiliation.

# TEACHING METHODS CHEAT SHEET:

## Recommended Books for English Education Methods Instructors

Edited by Russell Mayo, University of Chicago-Illinois

In this recurring column, we will be featuring tips and suggestions by English Education methods instructors from across the country for graduate students involved in teaching methods courses. For this issue, we feature some highly recommended books, especially unknown or overlooked texts that other methods instructors should know about.



**William Ayers & Ryan Alexander-Tanner's *To Teach: The Journey in Comics*. Teachers College Press, 2010.**

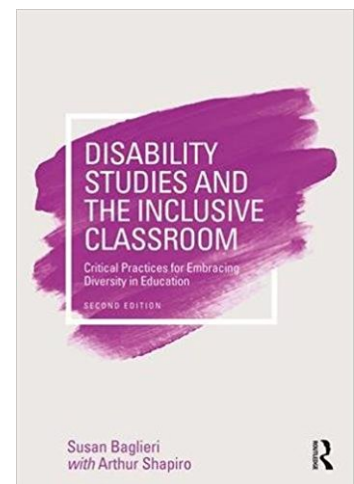
In this incredible comic book, you and your students get to step into and out of various classrooms. As you move inward together, you explore ideas about what real teaching and learning looks like and how to make these things a reality in schools. As you move outward, you can grapple with the big questions about how we've gone so far off track and convinced ourselves that teaching and learning are only about that which can be measured and scored.

-- **Dr. Brian Charest**, Assistant Professor of Education, Redlands University

**Susan Baglieri's *Disability Studies and the Inclusive Classroom*. Routledge, 2017.**

This updated edition makes a significant contribution to the growing community of scholars who seek to make pedagogical practices more inclusive. The field of disability studies in education aims to disrupt the ableist logic that has upheld normative expectations in both special education and inclusion practices for many years. Baglieri consolidates several decades of theory and research from the fields of both disability studies and special education. In addition to providing a survey of these fields, the text notes the intersectionality between race, gender, sexuality, class, and abilities.

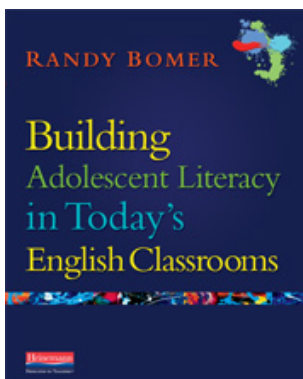
-- **Christopher Bass**, PhD Candidate, University of Illinois at Chicago



**Randy Bomer's *Building Adolescent Literacy in Today's English Classrooms*. Heinemann, 2011.**

This is my favorite English Education text. In asking teachers to rethink the goals of English class and providing detailed descriptions of the work readers and writers do, it is a great mix of the theoretical and the practical. For example, in the chapters on writing, Bomer explains the rationale for asking students to keep a writer's notebook and also presents concrete strategies for starting and maintaining notebooks in the classroom.

-- **Charlotte Land**, PhD Candidate, University of Texas at Austin



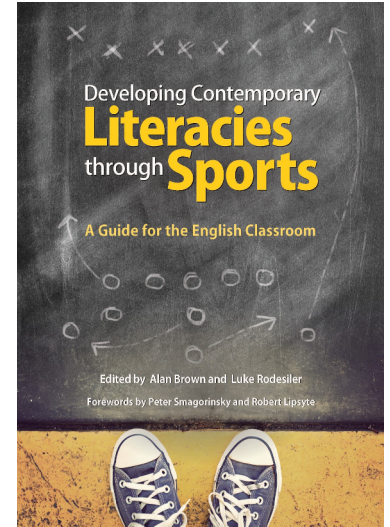


# TEACHING METHODS CHEAT SHEET:

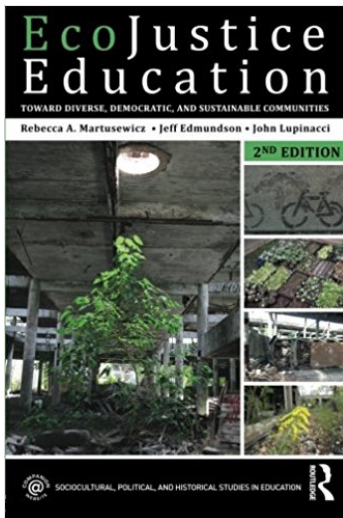
## Recommended Books for English Education Methods Instructors

[Alan Brown & Luke Rodesiler's \*Developing Contemporary Literacies Through Sports: A Guide for the English Classroom\*, NCTE, 2016.](#)

Noting that English teachers needn't be sports fans, Brown and Rodesiler aptly note that the "passion or disdain that many of us feel reveals the prevalence of sports and the impact of sports culture in our everyday lives" (xxi). The editors establish a strong case for more discussion of sports and sports culture among scholars and practitioners, presenting what they hope to be "a valuable resource for educators who are eager to engage sports-minded as well as sports-averse students, both inside and outside the English classroom" (xxii). Encountering literature and literacy through a sports lens can spark lively debates with modern-day implications, thus this text would be an asset for any educator's bookshelf.



-- **Elizabeth Currin**, PhD Candidate in Education, University of Florida



[Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci's \*EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities\*, Routledge, 2016.](#)

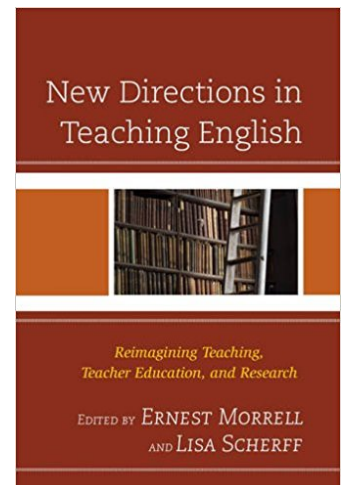
This book offers a wealth of social, political, and ecological information while challenging teachers to question our commonsense narratives and approaches to education, diversity, and the natural world. The authors offer loads of resources for further reading/teaching, as well as chapters about interdisciplinary community, school, and classroom projects that seek to revitalize the cultural and ecological commons. I HIGHLY recommend this book for all current and future teachers!

-- **Russell Mayo**, PhD Candidate, University of Illinois at Chicago

[Ernest Morrell and Lisa Scherff's \*New Directions in Teaching English: Reimagining Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research\*, Roman & Littlefield, 2015.](#)

This collection offers an energizing purpose for English Education—"critical literacy in which young people gain a set of skills that allow them to become more able, discerning, and empowered consumers of text" (xiii)—and they nicely bring forth this purpose by weaving together voices from various stakeholders, including teachers, teacher educators, and researchers. I'm also a big fan of the first five chapters, which highlight what's going right in five English teachers' classrooms.

-- **Mandie B. Dunn**, PhD Student, Michigan State University



# Advice for Grad Students: Getting Published in Academia

CEE-GS sponsored a morning of workshops geared for graduate students at the CEE 2017 Conference. This panel, titled "Getting Published in Academia," featured Tara Star Johnson, professor at Purdue University and editor of *English Education* and Steven Bickmore, professor at University of Nevada Las Vegas and former editor of the *ALAN Review*. You can find the full version of their remarks and the follow-up Q&A session on the NCTE YouTube Channel ([direct link here](#)). Key tips and strategies they shared, as well as useful responses to the follow-up questions from attendees, are summarized below.

Edited by Amber Jensen, George Mason University



**TARA STAR JOHNSON**



**STEVEN BICKMORE**

**Tara Johnson** and **Steven Bickmore** both drew upon their past experiences and memories of being new academics navigating the publishing world as well as their current and recent roles as editors of publications to frame the advice they had for new graduate student researchers and writers.

Tara's first suggestion was that all writers read [10 tips for first time RTE Authors](#), from which she selected and expounded further upon a few key tips for successful publication:

**1. Follow the guidelines for submission (RTE Tip #1).** Be aware of the expectations for the journal you are writing for. In *English Education*, for example, editors expect authors have everything within 40 pages, including references, tables, figures, etc. "Don't kill yourself if you're at 42 pages," Johnson says, though. "That can be part of the process of narrowing" through the editing process. But take the first crack: "You're gonna

have to know how to trim! Don't wait for the editors and reviewers tell you where to cut."

**2. Seek out and meet editors (RTE Tip #2).** Major conferences like NCTE, AERA, and LRA have roundtables, where you can meet editors of major journals and have conversations with them in person. Johnson encourages writers to take advantage of this opportunity; "It can be a much faster process to acceptance; they are expecting your work, which makes for smoother sailing," she says. Follow up once you have submitted; remind editors about past conversations to help close the loop. "The editor will already be predisposed to like the manuscript because they already like you for making that effort!"

**3. Cite previous articles in journal (RTE Tip #7).** This shows that you are familiar with the journal and the conversations within it (especially from recent issues). Remember that people you cite might be your reviewers, so be careful about how

# Getting Published in Academia (continued)

you talk about them; they might be reading what you say about them! Johnson warns, your attempt to connect to articles in the journal “shouldn’t be artificial; don’t try to stretch to try to fit in references to articles published in the journal. If the kinds of conversations your piece references aren’t in the journal, it might not be the best fit.”

**4. Write clearly (RTE Tip #8).** Remember that your piece is up against others that are well written. If you’re still getting comfortable with academic writing or need motivation, get in a writing group. Get feedback on your piece prior to submitting. Johnson says that some assumptions we may have about quality writing don’t necessarily hold (even though we are English teachers, not everything we submit is good writing!)

**5. Don’t bite off more than you can chew.** Don’t try to condense an entire dissertation into 40 pages - this sacrifices analysis and depth because it requires too much space to focus on framework and methodology. Consider the following: What piece could stand on its own? How can you contextualize the piece within a larger project? Think about how to go from the overall data collection and analysis to the piece that the article focuses on. Be mindful as you make those choices.

**6. Try not to take rejection personally.** *English Education* gets about 2 new manuscripts a week, about 100 manuscripts a year. Of those, the journal publishes 4 issues (one is a themed issue). There are 3 issues for regular manuscripts. Each issue can handle about 2.5 full-length articles because editors are working within page constraints. Acceptance rate is about 10 - 15%. If you get a revise and resubmit, that’s a really good thing! It’s not necessarily a bad thing if it’s a rejection; it just may be that there may be others ahead of you in the pipeline. It also might not be about you, but rather limitations of the journal or the direction of the journal.

**7. Aim high.** Go for the top-tier journals (TCR, RTE, Harvard Ed Review). Don’t put all of your eggs in that basket and don’t be too elitist about mid-tier journals. Volume may matter more than the venues that they’re in, especially early in your career (it’s a balance).

Bickmore reinforced some of these suggestions in his comments, telling attendees, “We never gave a revise and resubmit that we did not want to see again. In *Alan Review*, they would receive  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the Revise and Resubmits come back. Be willing to revise and resubmit!” Other advice he shared included:

**1. Make a plan.** It may help to create a writing group. This will encourage you to just write, keep deadlines, and have people to hold you accountable. Purchase and read the book [How to Write A Lot](#); it addresses the issues that block us from writing, helps you establish a schedule, and has helped Bickmore become really productive. You have to know what you’re going to do next!

**2. All publications are good publications.** Publish at every opportunity. Low-hanging fruit, such as a column for the English Journal, still counts!

**3. Build confidence.** You can do things like build your CV to include pieces in press, in review, and in progress. “In your own mind, your vita looks bigger than it is, which helps you see where the future is,” Bickmore said. Begin to construct and make arguments for why you’re publishing where you are. You’re making an argument for what your body of work will be. Put the next 10 things you’re working on so you have a vision for what’s next!

Graduate writers can begin with these steps as they build their confidence and familiarity with the academic publishing process.

# "Oversharing in Writing Workshop"

Sarah Donovan's popular blog, [Ethical ELA](#), features conversations on the ethics of teaching English. Her engaging and thoughtful articles offer classroom narratives around questions of teaching and learning literacy with compassion. An active member of NCTE and CEE, Sarah currently teaches 7th graders in a suburban Chicago and preservice teachers at DePaul University. Her dissertation, entitled [Genocide Literature in Middle and Secondary Classrooms](#), was published by Routledge in 2017. She's currently working on her first YA novel, [Alone Together](#).

Column edited by Russell Mayo, University of Chicago, Illinois

## BLOGGER'S CORNER

by Sarah J. Donovan, PhD

Excerpted from article published June 22 on the Ethical ELA Blog

My husband has always cautioned me about oversharing with my students. I tell students about my absent-minded episodes like putting the blueberries in the cabinet instead of the fridge or wearing two different colored boots to school. I tell them stories about my mother who has sort of broken up with me. I tell them about my ten siblings and how I grew up sleeping on the floor. Outside of the classroom, I am actually quite private, but the students make it easy for me to be vulnerable, for me to be a teacher and be Sarah, and so I write as absent-minded, sensitive Sarah. That said, my husband is right about a lot of things, and so I thought I would reflect on my sharing here, and then open up the conversation

to see how you balance and blend your teacher-writer selves.

### [Sarah Composing in Class](#)

Most days in our eighth grade writing class, we would begin with a "compose for five" or five minutes of writing about anything. I would offer suggestions or pictures for inspiration, but most students came to class with a lot to say and needed, appreciated this time to say it in their journals. I did, too. Sometimes, after composing, we'd share in partners or small groups and then go back to writing to see if we could develop an idea further. Looking through my writing journal now, I am delighted by some of my poems and stories, but other entries make me wonder if I overshared.

Here is a short personal narrative that I wrote the second month of school, "Pearls in the Palm." I took this "compose for five" through the writing process, using it to model narrative techniques, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, and publishing. Students had a lot to say about this piece (and you may, too), but what I

remember well are comments from students such as "I feel like I know you better," "I didn't know writing can be about this stuff," and students gave me some nice compliments about the ending. Reading it now, I am sure my husband would be mortified that I brought this personal experience into the classroom. Is it an example of oversharing?

### [Excerpts from "Pearls in the Palm"](#)

*I move my hand to my mouth and cough. When I pull my hand away, I see three pearls resting in my palm. Shock. Confusion. What is this? I wonder feeling dazed. Upon a closer look, I realize that those "pearls" are my teeth.*

*I feel around my mouth with my tongue. My teeth feel loose, and in the gaps, I feel the groves of my roots. Another tooth falls away from my gums, and I can feel it resting in the pocket between my gums and my jaw. I spit it out careful not to touch another tooth.*

*I am panicking. My heart is racing; my hands are shaking, and then I wake up.*

# "Oversharing in Writing Workshop" (continued)

*I jump out of bed and run into the bathroom. Exhale. I have all my teeth. And as my heart rate calms and my hand steady, I wonder why I keep having this dream. I look at the visage staring back at me in the mirror. Something about my eyes makes me realize that my father is behind my dreams, that my father is speaking to me.*

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*My dad died last year. His girlfriend found him, and the coroner said that he had been dead for a few days. You see, my father lived alone. When I say "lived," I mean lived his life alone — not just that he was the only person in his condo. He like life that way: alone. However, some say that living alone is not really the best thing for a human being, and I think it was not really the best thing for my dad. Dad was so focused on ideas that he often neglected his health and that meant his teeth. He'd drink Mountain Dew and eat Marie Calendar's frozen dinners. He'd get so caught up in ideas that he often did not shower or brush his teeth for days at a time. By the time he was seventy, he only had a few teeth remaining. The ones that had fallen out, I found by his beside after he died.*

*For days at a time, we would not hear from Dad. It was typical, really. Sometimes the only way I knew he was alive was when*

*I'd get a call from the hospital saying he was in the emergency room. My dad developed a heart condition, and when he didn't take his medicine, his lungs would fill up with fluid making it difficult for him to breathe, so he'd often call 9-1-1 in a panic. The hospital fixed him up, but he always went back to living the same way. He was an idea man, and his ideas killed him.*

*About a year before he died, I discovered he was living like one of those people you see on TV — stacks of paper and books and trash everywhere. With the help of my ten siblings, we convinced him (actually threatened him) to live with me and my husband. The other siblings did not really want him to live with them, and we had a spare room. My dad said he'd stay with us until he found another apartment, but we wanted him to live in an assisted living community, which is a place where nurses and other care givers check in on him to make sure he is eating, keeping things neat, and taking his medication. After a few months living together, which I really enjoyed because we had lots of great conversations about life over breakfast, he moved into an assisted living apartment, but it did not last long.*

*One day I received a letter in the mail saying he moved out and that he was going back into the condo. He felt like the assisted living place was a prison with old*

*people, and he said that he was not "old."*

*A month later, my dad died alone in his condo. He died where he wanted, in a room beside his canoe and among his designs of cars and trucks he never saw built no less driving down the street. He died as Skippy.*

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*I stared at the mirror. "What?" I shouted. "What are you saying, Dad? What do you want from me because you didn't want much from me when you were alive."*

*My eyes became red, and the tears made my vision a bit distorted. I saw a young Sarah in the mirror. Her eyes were looking*

**WHAT I REMEMBER  
WELL ARE COMMENTS  
FROM STUDENTS  
SUCH AS "I FEEL LIKE I  
KNOW YOU BETTER,"**

*for advice from her father. "You're okay. You are your father's daughter, but you are not your father's choices. Just be," I whispered to myself.*

*My sisters always said that I was the most like my dad because I had all these ideas in my head, because I could get lost in my imagination. I guess I am — like*

# FOR YOUR CALENDAR UPCOMING CONFERENCES

## LRA 2017:

Renaissance Esmeralda Indian Wells Resort  
& Spa in Indian Wells, California  
November 28 - December 1, 2017

## JOLLE 2018:

UGA Hotel and Conference Center  
Athens, Georgia  
February 3-4, 2018

## CCCC 2018:

Kansas City, Missouri  
March 14-17, 2018

## NCTEAR 2018:

Towson University  
Towson, Maryland  
March 16-18, 2018

## AERA 2018:

New York, New York  
April 13-17, 2018

## NCTE 2018:

Houston, Texas, November 15-18, 2018

## "Oversharing in Writing Workshop" (continued)

*my dad. And while that scares me a little bit, I think it is what make me his daughter but also Sarah and just human.*

*I opened up the floss, pulled out a long string, and began working the waxy string in between my teeth, gently into my gums. I brushed, and then I rinsed with fluoride. I smiled at my pearly white teeth and turned off the light.*

### Why Share?

In the classroom, I guess I write more like Sarah than a teacher. I do believe that in the writing classroom teachers have to be writers, and my writing is and sort of has to be, for me, personal. That just seems "ethical" to me because it gets us closer to what it means to be human.

Writing has helped me witness my life, and when I share my writing, others witness my life, too. Is that the job of a teacher? Well, yes. I ask students to trust me with their lives, their stories. I ask students to let me bear witness to their lives. In some instances, I am the only one who reads, witnesses their written lives. It is my privilege, and I feel like they want to reciprocate.

What do you think about this? Did you keep a journal this school year? Did you write more like a "teacher" or as your self? How do you navigate this question of oversharing? What kinds of writing and sharing experiences seem most central and important in your classroom?

**DO YOU WRITE  
MORE LIKE A  
"TEACHER" OR AS  
YOURSELF?**

# Accomplishments & Accolades of CEE-GS Members



## Anthony Celaya

received the NCTE Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award in May 2017. This awards was created to support early career educators as they build accomplished teaching careers in literacy education through a two-year mentorship program, and the program's goal is to develop future leaders in NCTE.



## Chris K. Bacon

published "Multilanguage, Multipurpose: A Literature Review, Synthesis, and Framework for Critical Literacies in English Language Teaching" on July 10th 2017 in the *Journal of Literacy Research*.



## Alice Hays

published "Authentically 'Authored Native American young Adult Literature and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy in the Preparation of Preservice Teachers" in the *Journal of American Indian Education*. Volume 56, Number 2.



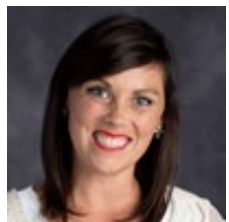
## David Premont

co-published "Picture Books as Mentor Texts for 10th Grade Struggling Writers" in the July issue of *Literacy Research and Instruction*. Volume 56, Issue 4, 290-310.



## Katie Alford

co-published "Take Time to Write!: A Teacher's Story of Writing within a Community of Teacher Writers" this October in *English Leadership Quarterly*.



## Amber Jensen

co-authored the foreword to *Creating Student-Staffed Writing Centers, Grades 6-12 (2nd Edition)* by Rich Kent, published this fall by Peter Lang Publishers.

# INTERESTED IN JOINING A CEE COMMISSION?

Join us for CEE Commission Meetings at NCTE  
Friday, November 17, 2:00 - 3:15 PM | Saturday, November 18, 4:30 - 5:45 PM

## Commission on Writing Teacher Education

Our goal is to bring attention to the professional development of writing teachers at elementary, middle, secondary, and college levels, with particular emphasis on bringing together writing teacher educators from the English education community with those from college composition.

## Commission on the Study and Teaching of Adolescent Literature

Our goal is to bring together leaders in the academic field of adolescent literature for the purpose of planning and sharing research and teaching experiences and to plan, advocate and promote scholarship in the field of adolescent literature.

## Commission on New Literacies, Technologies and Teacher Education

Our goal is to examine the current issues of technology infusion in existing ELA teacher preparation programs, locate relevant research that points to best practices in preservice programs, and make recommendations about preparing ELA preservice as a tool for teaching and learning.

## Commission on Social Justice in Teacher Education Programs

Our goal is to develop and uncover models of teaching that are flexible with regard to race, class, and gender; to determine how teachers in English language arts see themselves and others; and to delineate the opportunities for transformation, constructive growth, and change in their profession.

## Commission to Support Early Career English Language Arts Teachers

Our goal is to support early career English Language Arts educators as they begin their professional journeys in K-12 classrooms.

## Commission on English Methods Teaching and Learning

Our goal is to inform membership regarding trends and issues in the design of English methods courses and their effect on teacher learning.

## Commission on the Teaching of Poetry

Our goals are (1) to promote the teaching of poetry across all curriculum, (2) to examine, suggest, and promote innovative ways of teaching and responding to poetry, and (3) to establish a culture and community for the reading, writing, and teaching of poetry.

## Commission on the Arts and Literacies

Our goal is to effect change in ELA classrooms by advancing teaching, research, and theory in the three areas of the arts, multimodalities, and new literacies in ways that situate this knowledge as essential to literacy learning. We identify sound strategies that integrate the arts, multimodalities, and new literacies with literacy education.

## Commission on Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Our goal is to establish an activist working group of constituents who will critically engage with School-to-Prison Pipeline (STPP) research and disseminate and engage with 'glocal' communities and their constituents where NCTE/CEE hosts conventions.