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Dimensions and Directions

The Joint Ph.D. Program in English and Education
at the University of Michigan

Volume 27

Fall 2020

From the Chair

Recent Dissertations

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Rhetorics of Masking: Negotiating Disclosures of Disability and Trauma

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Towards a Theory and Practice of Translingual Transfer: A Study of 6 International Undergraduate Students

Chair: Anne Ruggles Gere

Ryan McCarty, Ph.D.



Greetings to all,

In the midst of this roaring pandemic, it gives me great pleasure to share news of some of the “normal” activities that have continued on campus and to display how our alums are persevering with teaching, researching, and supporting their students and institutions in so many different ways.

As you will see in the following pages, we welcomed a marvelous new group of students into JPEE, and they had the courage to come to Ann Arbor, never having seen it and never having met students or faculty in person, because all of our recruitment activities had to go online last spring. Since Andrew, Catherine, Kelly, and Michelle arrived I have seen them in person exactly once: on my backyard patio where we gathered, socially distanced with masks, for a few hours. Resourceful and resilient as they are, they found places to live, moved their belongings, and went through orientation with very little human contact, participated in the English Department Writing Program training (orchestrated by JPEE alum Laura Aull, a new member of the English Department faculty and director of EDWP), and have been teaching and taking courses online all semester.

Our current students have likewise met the challenges of the past year with courage and ingenuity. Working in both the English department and in the School of Education, they have adapted their teaching effectively, carried on with various research projects, participated in online conferences, and published articles. Most of all, they have, with Jeanie’s support, helped to preserve the strong supportive community that is a hallmark of the Program. Be sure to read about all they have done, and note, especially, the two Hopwood awards (a first for JPEE) won by Carlina Duan.

Meanwhile, three students completed their PhDs and moved on to new positions. Adrienne, Elizabeth and Ryan all completed fascinating dissertations, and I invite you to read about each. They and their faculty advisors managed the complexities of discussing revisions, carrying out defenses, and completing final meetings with Rackham online. They, like current JPEE students, benefitted from Rackham’s flexibility and willingness to provide extra support for graduate students whose research was upended or delayed by COVID.

One of the few blessings of this abnormal time is that more people are nurturing connections online, and I was delighted by how many of you responded to the call to tell us about the ways you are adapting to teaching, researching and administering online. Many thanks for sharing your experiences, accomplishments, awards, and insights with the JPEE community.

In closing, I want to acknowledge everyone who contributes to JPEE: the faculty members who serve as mentors and/or members of the admissions committee (Anne Curzan, David Gold, Mary Schleppegrell, Meg Sweeney, Tom Toon, and M Remi Yergeau); all the current students who do amazing things; Jeanie Laubenthal, the Program Administrator who keeps everything on track; and all the alumni and friends who provide networks of support, both tangible and intangible. I owe you all a great debt of gratitude.



Professor Anne R. Gere

Fall 2020 Cohort



After graduating with a bachelors in English and Writing Studies from Western Washington University, **Andrew Appleton Pine** moved to Michigan with his now-wife to teach English at Cranbrook Kingswood School, a private school in Bloomfield Hills. After a couple of years teaching at Cranbrook, Andrew decided to pursue an MA at Michigan State University in writing and rhetoric (though his diploma actually reads “Critical Studies in Literacy and Pedagogy,” but that’s a bit of a mouthful). At MSU, he completed a thesis on accessibility in writing centers. Despite repeated warnings from Michiganders about the epic rivalry between State and Michigan, Andrew has joined the English and Education cohort, where he will continue to read and write about (among other things) accessibility, antiracist pedagogy, and literacy. He will be commuting from Bloomfield Hills where he lives with his wife and beautiful Australian Shepherd, Zoë.



Kelly Hartwell hails from Bangor, Maine, and earned her BAs in English and in Art Education at the University of Maine. After her undergraduate work, she spent a few years working as a legal assistant at a law office during which time she became deeply interested in the complex interplay between distribution of occluded legal genres (although she didn’t quite have the academic language to articulate that, yet,) and in the influences that the circulation of those texts have on who we (think we and others) are. These experiences furthered her interest in language and writings’ capacity to situate people in relation to others. She earned her MA in English from the University of Maine before taking on a role as mentor for first-year graduate student instructors and teaching writing courses for the UMaine English department. Her interests include the interplay among rhetorical agency, metacognition, and identity: how people (whether novice scholars or newcomers to a private sector organization) language their ways into particular kinds of membership.

Fall 2020 continued...

Michelle Ratering is a Michigander, a teacher, and a passionate learner. With a background in Secondary Education, English Language Arts, and teaching English as an additional language, Michelle brings many years of teaching experience to her work as a PhD student at The University of Michigan. Her research interests include engagement with topics around teacher identity, the teacher-research gap, international education, and how technology impacts education, literacy, and life.



Catherine Ventura is a Paterson, New Jersey native and the daughter of Dominican immigrants. She graduated from Seton Hall University, earning her B.A. in English and M.A. in English Literature. After several years of serving as a community mentor through the Saving Literacy Program, a community-based organization, writing instructor, and an academic and financial aid university. Advisor, Catherine joined a Newark-based college-bound access program to work with low-income and first-generation students full-time. As a director, she gained experience managing the organization's grant writing, recruitment processes, community involvement, and data collection and analysis. In addition to creating and teaching curriculum for a summer writing program, Catherine helped develop and launch the organization's first-ever middle school programming as well as the nonprofit's first Anti-Racism Committee, for which she served as Co-Chair. Since graduating, Catherine also taught first-year writing courses at Seton Hall University and Montclair State University each semester. Outside of teaching and nonprofit administration, she focused on uplifting and caring for her community by serving as a Board Trustee and Board Secretary at a charter school in her hometown as well as an Advisory Board Member for a nonprofit geared towards helping low-income women and children. All of these experiences have led to her joining the E&E program, where she plans to research Latinx students' literacy practices and these how literacy practices relate to the ways these students come to understand and make meaning of their identities.



JPEE Current Student Activities

Jason Godfrey, Sarah Hughes, Andrew Moos, Kendon Smith and **Adelay Witherite** serve as the coordinators for the Language and Rhetorical Studies Interdisciplinary Workshop, and they are pleased to have **Professor David Gold** continue in his role as faculty sponsor.

Anna Almore, Carlina Duan, monét cooper, Andrew Moos, and **Crystal Zanders** served on the English Department Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Group. They collaboratively planned and facilitated the first graduate student-led EDWP orientation.

Carlina Duan and **Katie Van Zanen** are involved with two Ginsberg Center projects this fall. They are members of the 2020 cohort of the Engaged Pedagogy Initiative, a community-engaged learning workshop co-managed by Ginsberg and the Rackham Program in Public Scholarship, and teaching English 126: Community-Engaged Writing. Katie's section of 126 will produce blog posts for HealthcareCounts, the communications arm of the Washtenaw Health Plan. Carlina's students will work with *Groundcover News*, Ann Arbor's street newspaper that seeks to raise awareness of the plight of homelessness.

An article co-written with Professors **Anne Ruggles Gere**, and **Anne Curzan**, alum **James Hammond**, current students **Sarah Hughes, Ruth Li, Andrew Moos, Kendon Smith, Kathryn Van Zanen, Kelly L. Wheeler,** and **Crystal Zanders**, titled "Communal Justicing: Writing Assessment, Disciplinary Infrastructure, and the Case for Critical Language Awareness," is forthcoming in the February issue of *College Composition and Communication*.

Professor **David Gold, Jathan Day,** and **Adrienne Raw** published "Who's Afraid of Facebook? A Survey of Students' Online Writing Practices" in the September 2020 issue of *College Composition and Communication*.

Jathan Day is in his second year as Graduate Associate for the Digital Rhetoric Collaborative and his third year as Graduate Consultant for the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT).

Ruth Li published an article, "Visualizing Essay Elements: A Color-coding Approach to Teaching First-year Writing," in the *Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy*; "Teaching Disciplinary Writing Using Google Ngrams" in *Visualizing Objects, Places, and Spaces: A Digital Project Handbook*; "Analyzing Rhetorical Appeals: A Lesson for College Students," in The MLA (Modern Language Association) Style Center; and a blog post, "The Computers and Composition Digital Press: A Ten-Year Retrospective," in *The Scholar Electric Blog*, Computers and Composition Digital Press.

Ruth Li served as a digital fellow with the Computers and Composition Digital Press (CCDP), a documentarian for CCCC 2020, and a stage one proposal reviewer for CCCC 2021.

Ruth Li and **Andrew Moos** are this year's Graduate Student Mentors in the English Department Writing Program.

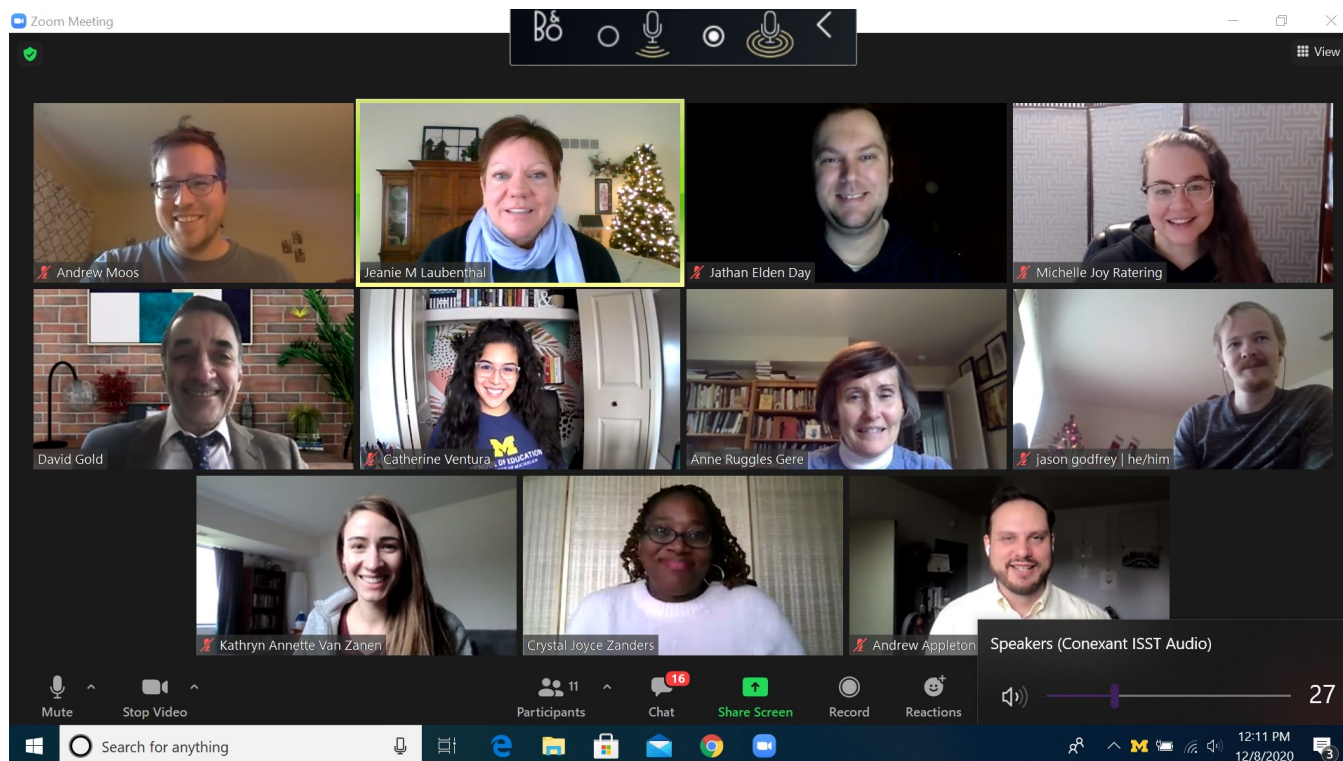


JPEE Current Student Activities continues...

Naitnaphit Limlamai presented at a variety of conferences last year, including at the *Journal of Language and Literacy Education (JoLLE)* winter conference, and at NCTE. She also conducted two presentations and workshops at the Atlanta Girls' School to support teachers' move to antiracist curricular, pedagogical, and assessment choices.

Naitnaphit also continued her work as diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity chair for the Michigan Council of Teachers of English: she presented on building support for diversity, inclusion, justice, and equity (dije) in the annual Fall conference of MCTE. This led to the development of three programs: hosting an antiracist book club; developing curated antiracist teaching resources for PreK-16 ELA teachers and teacher educators; and a webinar that brought together author Carlin Borsheim-Black and Val Valentino, a high school teacher from Troy, MI to talk about Borsheim-Black book and showcase student work from engaging in the ideas presented in the book.

Chalk and Cheese 2020-2021 Using Zoom to Gather Weekly



JPEE Awards

Carlina Duan's forthcoming collection of poems, *Alien Miss*, has received honorable mention from the Brittingham and the Felix Pollack Prizes in Poetry, awarded by the University of Wisconsin Press.

Megan Garver, Michael Hoffman, Sarah Hughes, Ruth Li, Kendon Smith, and Kelly Wheeler achieved candidacy in 2020.

monét cooper, Ruth Li, and Andrew Moos received a Rackham Supplemental Block Grant for Curricular Development.

Michael Hoffman, Sarah Hughes, Ruth Li, and Kendon Smith received Rackham Graduate Student Research Grants.

Ruth Li received a Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) scholarship, and a Rackham Professional Development Grant.

Naitnaphit Limlamai was awarded an English and Education Research Grant.

Michelle Sprouse was the recipient of the 2019-2020 David and Linda Moscow Prize for Excellence in Teaching Composition. This award is given to instructors remarkable for the energy, passion, insight, pedagogical skill and creativity, and commitment they bring to the teaching of writing.

During 2019-2020, the following students were awarded a Rackham One-term Dissertation Fellowship: **Jathan Day, Kendon Smith, and Kelly Wheeler.**

Adrienne Raw and Michelle Sprouse were awarded Rackham Graduate School Humanities Fellowships in 2020.



Hopwood Award Theodore Roethke Prize for the Long Poem or Poetic Sequence

Carlina Duan, a class of 2025 doctoral student in the LSA/School of Education Joint Program in English and Education from Ann Arbor, MI for “Alien Miss.”

Hopwood Graduate Nonfiction

Carlina Duan, a class of 2025 doctoral student in the LSA/School of Education Joint Program in English and Education from Ann Arbor, MI for “Liquid Moment.”



2019-2020 Dissertations

Adrienne Raw, Ph.D.

Fandom Discussion: Knowledge, Intersections, and Tensions of Self, Community and Social Justice

Chair: Megan Sweeney



Adrienne's dissertation investigates how text-based discussion is practiced and theorized in the context of digital fandom. The project focuses on fans of media objects (e.g. TV shows, movies, books) who interact with these objects via fanfiction, fan art, and metatextual writing. The mixed-methods, qualitative approach draws from autoethnographic reflection, a large-scale survey, and semi-structured interviews with twelve demographically diverse participants to interrogate and explore knowledge of, intersections between, and tension within self, community, and social justice in fandom discussions on Tumblr. Fans actively negotiate complex and contradictory impacts of discussion, recognizing it as a place of identity discovery, community education, and social justice, while critiquing these same discussions for their potential to facilitate harassment and divide the community. Using feminist ethics of care as a lens, this dissertation argues that the fandom discussion is driven by themes of self, community, and social justice, and that these themes are enacted through guiding ethics of self-care and community care. Tension in the conceptualization, valuing, and enactment

of these ethics causes much of the contemporary conflict in fandom spaces because an action that one fan deems community care is understood by another as an attack on the self. It concludes argue that unearthing and examining these guiding ethics and their conflicts can help fans resolve conflict in fandom and help digital studies scholars better understand contention in online spaces, but that these ethics also need to be critiqued for the ways that they can make it more difficult to confront issues like racism in our digital communities and in ourselves.

Adrienne is an assistant professor at SUNY- Cortland in the English Department.

Ryan McCarty, Ph.D.

Towards a Theory and Practice of Translingual Transfer: A Study of 6 International Undergraduate Students

Chair: Anne Ruggles Gere

Ryan's dissertation discusses six Chinese transfer students' time during their first semester studying in an American research university. Ryan illustrates the ways that language practices from across students' experiences are sometimes adaptable and sometimes seen as incommensurable. His emphasis is on bridging translingual and transfer scholarship to better understand the ways that more dynamic views of languaging can be brought to bear on discussions of how students draw on their full repertoire of knowledge and skills when writing in new contexts.

Ryan is excitedly starting a lecturer position in the Fall with the English Department Writing Program at the University of Michigan, where he will teach introductory and intermediate writing courses.



2019-2020 Dissertations

Elizabeth Tacke, Ph.D.

Rhetorics of Masking: Negotiating Disclosures of Disability and Trauma

Co-chairs: Megan Sweeney and Melanie Yergeau

Every day, individuals must navigate how, when, and to what extent they disclose disability and/or trauma, because doing so is a risky act, weighted with consequences. For example, disclosing disability can help to counter social stigma associated with disability, but doing so can also carry negative personal consequences. Too often, disclosure is positioned in binary terms: we disclose, or we remain silent. Drawing on data generated through discussion groups and semi-structured interviews with ten women who self-identify as disabled, my dissertation complicates existing theories of disclosure by exploring how individuals employ rhetorical tactics of “masking” in their disclosures of disability and trauma. I understand disclosure as a process of revealing and concealing, of engaging in silence and speech (or other multimodal and embodied communication). I argue that we need to understand disclosure more capaciously and that masking enables participants to mediate their stories of self in ways that help them enact agency and find validation while skirting some of the social and embodied consequences of disclosure. For example, participants’ rhetorical tactics of masking include adopting larger narratives as proxies for their own stories; employing figurative language to nuance and co-construct meaning with interlocutors; and using affective veils to translate anger into humor in order to soften disclosures. Antigone writes satirical posts to voice her frustrations navigating sexist and ableist structures of medical school; Mary Ellen adopts euphemism and varied pronouns to voice her experiences of dissociation after an assault; and Lanae voices her intersectional experiences of depression as an African-American, lesbian woman through Mary Oliver’s poetry. In addition, my research participants offer myriad autotheoretical insights into how their trauma, disability, and other identities—including race, gender, sexuality, and class—intersect.



Elizabeth is an Assistant Professor of English at Eastern Illinois University. She teaches English Language Arts methods courses, composition courses, and will get to teach a variety of electives starting next year. This interdisciplinary English program allows her to continue exploring all of the various interests she had while at Michigan.



JPEE Alumni Updates...

This year isn't like any other year, but despite all the challenges, teaching, learning, and researching are all moving forward. The Newsletter helps to keep JPEE alumni in touch with one another, and it is a great resource for current students who look to graduates for indications of what their own careers might look like.

Steve Bernhardt ('81) has taught university courses using hybrid models and delivered corporate training for many years. He still does training in writing and communication for various pharmaceutical companies, using Zoom or similar platforms. In the mid-90s, he worked with Roche in Basel, Switzerland, to create global team rooms, where international drug development teams worked daily to develop filing documents for new drugs, most notably the first protease inhibitor for HIV AIDs. Steve continues to teach researchers across many countries and companies. Here he offers advice for online teaching based on his years of experiences.

It's important to have very good sound transmission, especially when participants come from different language groups. He believe good lighting is important given the varying quality of people's cameras. Skin tone affects appearance on screen. We want to connect personally with people on the screen, and lighting is important to seeing and reading expressions.

It is also really important to have good moderation, to make sure good ideas are heard, that individuals do not dominate, that side conversations do not detract from group discussion, and that the session stays on track given the instructional goals. Time must be well managed, so the important business is completed without rushing because time is running out. The moderator and participants need to be encouraged to speak up when things are not going well and everyone needs to work to support the rules that govern productive work.

Teaching via video is tiring, so it is important to keep sessions relatively brief and to mix up activities. Breaks are important. Breakout rooms are critical to support activity patterns that move among full group, small group, and individual work. Tasks need to be sharply defined, so people know what is expected when put in a small group environment or what to do when the full group reconvenes to capture the good work. Activities can be synchronous, asynchronous, individual, paired, teamed, or full group. It helps to mix things up.

Try to think about the ancillary skills that working remotely can develop. No matter what course you are teaching, you can purposefully develop students' abilities to write, design, and solve problems collaboratively in pairs or small groups, to exchange texts and offer useful revision suggestions, to monitor group performance and keep work on track, and to use online tools for collaboration. You can also purposefully work to sensitize people to what it takes to have an effective team, one that does not marginalize individuals and that shows students how to gain satisfaction from working together and accomplishing meaningful work.

There are excellent resources out there for helping students learn to work on teams, including team-based and problem-based learning. (Google these terms if you are not familiar with these approaches.) One excellent Youtube video from Carnegie Mellon is an example of the kind of informed teaching we can support if we are sensitive to issues of marginalization on teams: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5ShTBRw8xY&feature=youtu.be>

JPEE Alumni Updates...

Ann Burke ('18) has been talking with her Michigan State University students about being fully online, and they have collectively noted the changes in lifestyle from having to navigate new learning platforms to establishing boundaries between school life, work life, and family life, and even how we move less than we might in an in-person classroom. Sitting in front of zoom all day, for instance, feels much different than moving around the classroom to interact with everyone.

Ann published an article in Summer 2019: "What Does it Mean to Be Prepared for College-Level Writing?: Examining how college-bound students are influenced by institutional representations of preparedness and college-level writing," in *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education*: Vol.7.1.6. She also recently contributed to the creation and State Board of Education approval of the new teacher preparation standards for English Language Arts for Middle Grades (5-9) and High School (7-12). You can find the new ELA standards published on MDE's website at www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ELA_Standards_5-9_7-12_699274_7.pdf. Sean Kottke (at MDE) and she presented on the development of the standards to solicit feedback from teachers at MCTE's 2019 conference as well, which she believe helped to get the standards off the ground.

After 12 years at the University of Notre Dame, **Christian Dallavis** ('08) left higher education to join the Partnership Schools, a school management organization that transforms urban Catholic schools in Harlem and the Bronx in New York, and in Cleveland, Ohio. As assistant superintendent of the network, Christian supports school leaders in strengthening school culture and is responsible for launching, leading, and growing the network's expansion to Cleveland, where he oversees school culture, leadership, academics, enrollment, and school operations.

For the previous six years, Christian had been senior director of leadership programs at Notre Dame, where he directed the nation's largest Catholic school principal preparation program, the Mary Ann Remick Leadership Program. Prior to that he was the founding director of the Notre Dame ACE Academies, a national network of 15 urban Catholic schools. In 2017, he was named a Pahara Fellow of the Aspen Institute.

Christian commutes (mostly by zooms lately) to Cleveland and New York from South Bend, IN, where his wife Julie, who finished her Ph.D. in sociology at Notre Dame last year, teaches in the education minor at Notre Dame, coordinates a graduate program, and does program evaluation and research. Their boys Max, Oliver, and Leo just started 7th, 5th, and 3rd grade, and all are grateful that they are back to school in-person, as quarantine with them has been as exhausting as one would expect.

Alisea W. McLeod ('98) has spent most of her career at several historically black colleges and universities including at Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. There, since 2011, she has enjoyed preparing undergraduates for careers as university faculty through the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) Mellon Mays Fellowship Program. McLeod and Rust colleagues in English have laid the groundwork for reimagining the English Education curriculum to transition the General Education writing requirement to an interdisciplinary, digital humanities focus. McLeod specifically has introduced Rust's undergraduate honors students to historical research and writing, with which she has been deeply involved since completing her dissertation. In 2015, McLeod contributed to *Webwriting: Why and How for Liberal Arts Teaching and Learning* (University of Michigan Press), in which she outlines the possibilities for intentionally involving undergraduate students in public humanities work.

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McLeod's focus on the digital humanities has helped her to create networks of support for public humanities throughout the state including her connection to the Mississippi Humanities Council, on whose board she has served since 2015. McLeod is rising as a digital humanities and public humanities scholar in Mississippi and beyond as she continues her work on digitizing obscure Civil War era records. In 2019, McLeod won an NEH Digital Humanities Advancement Grant with Scott Nesbit (University of Georgia) and John Clegg (University of Chicago). The project, titled "Freedom's Movement: Mapping African American Space in War and Reconstruction," brought together McLeod's digital work with two related projects whose common goal is to contribute to creation of new narratives around these historical eras. McLeod is currently on sabbatical and has a fellowship through the Neubauer Collegium for the Study of Culture and Society (University of Chicago). The year off will allow her to continue collaborations and to complete a manuscript on her own family's migrations. This summer she will be a featured speaker at a small meeting of Civil War and Emancipation historians and digital humanists—Practices of Emancipation—funded by Neubauer and held at the university.

Deborah Minter ('96) is currently serving as the Writing Program Administer at University of Nebraska-Lincoln and she is also a UNL Faculty Senate Executive Committee member. (She has been here for 24 years. It's astonishing to her that she has been here so long!) She has served in various administrative roles both in the department and as Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education in the College of Arts & Sciences.

For her institution, the transition to hybrid and online learning during the pandemic has been much like other large, post-secondary institutions' experiences (at least as she read about them in places like CHE). It is very hard to communicate well across such a large and diverse institution—and it is difficult to make and administer course delivery decisions with so many competing concerns and disciplinary traditions in the mix. So, of course, it has been a time of heavy and complex negotiations—between student organizations, GTAs, faculty and administrators.

This fall, she is teaching an in-person 300-level composition course that is split (to accommodate social distancing) with half the class meeting in person and online work accounting for the other class meetings (sometimes asynchronous; sometimes synchronous).

What she is struck by is not the mistakes or the frustration (though there is plenty of that). She is struck by the energy, resilience and determination of the UNL community (undergrads, grads and admin) who are working long hours to make something out of this moment. But it has also been uplifting. As she worked with new graduate teaching assistants across late July and early August to help them think about their course formats, to take just one example, they build online class materials, created engaging and accessible virtual spaces, and (for those with in-person class meetings) conceptualized their face-to-face writing activities. In this work she was reminded, again and again, of the robust intellectual communities that we enjoy as writing teachers (both locally, on campus—but also across our national and international networks).

Even as her heart breaks for the costs of the national tragedies we have endured (deaths and missed opportunities related to COVID; continuing indifference to racial injustices; etc.), she does look forward to seeing what we learn as teachers and scholars from this complex moment.

Online teaching has been challenging to say the least for **Renee M. Moreno** ('98). At California State University, Northridge they are plugging along. She has been hopping from here to there since March and when the lockdown happened she was in Denver with family. She is in Germany right now, and it is sane there. Reading the US news is depressing and she is hoping that everyone is safe and healthy.

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Anne Porter ('14) is in her fifth year as an Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center at Alma College. One significant change is that this year, due to the pandemic, the Writing Center has gone fully online. Anne has also been working as Composition Director to redesign the First Year Seminar course to scaffold the writing that students do in that course and the writing they do in English 101. She has also been working to integrate civic engagement goals into Alma's English 101 course, as part of General Education reform and in conjunction with an initiative of the Council of Independent Colleges. At Alma, she serves as a member of the Institutional Assessment Committee and Chair of Humanities.

Sarah Ruffing Robbins ('93) continues her work as Lorraine Sherley Chair in Literature at TCU. She is completing a term as chair of the MLA's K-16 committee, an opportunity for which she sends thanks (as in so many areas) to Anne Gere. With a team of co-editors, Sarah hopes that she'll also complete work early in 2021 on *Transatlantic Anglophone Literature, 1776-1920*, a new teaching text to be published by Edinburgh University Press. Also with Edinburgh, she is co-editing a new series of monographs on 19th-century American literature. A highlight of the challenging COVID-shaped 2020 was directing a week-long institute on American literature for high school teachers sponsored by Humanities Texas--and delivered via Zoom!

Laura Roop ('99) continues to direct the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project and teach. She is currently serving as Ombudsperson for graduate students and postdocs at University of Pittsburgh's School of Education. She is also active with the National Writing Project, serving on its national board and working on a Beloved Community Initiative. She also is still in touch with the Algebra Project and its "We the People" Math Alliance.

When the pandemic hit, the Western Pennsylvania Writing Project had already been recruiting for the Summer Institute and youth programs. They also had several other big events on the calendar. They paused, temporarily despaired, connected with their colleagues at other NWP sites, and then began shifting things online. First, they moved PoeArt, an art exhibit and poetry reading. Then, determining the Summer Institute was a priority, they changed the description, contacted all who had applied, and spread the word more broadly. The Summer Institute ended up with 22 participants. They then moved a conference, *A Mindful Day of Writing*, online, which permitted people from other parts of the country to participate. Finally, they decided to do a free pilot version of our Young Writers Institute online, as well as to provide the writing component for an on-site youth camp through virtual means. Becoming much more familiar and adept with Zoom and all things Google they are proud that they managed to move every single activity to an online space in some form. Here's a link to the agenda and recordings from the online conference: <https://sites.google.com/d/1bSM-ERB8IzTI6SonPzFBpWfPnK2CsAXu/p/1M9yXAeIGKpkBdEZUKcjjsup5qbLbbuX7/edit>

Kelly Sassi ('08) was promoted to full professor at North Dakota State University in August 2020. Over the summer, she collaborated with eight other writing project site directors to design a Virtual Writing Marathon. Almost 400 teachers participated in virtually touring the country, writing together, and sharing their writing in small groups. This October, her chapter, "The Role of Reading When Writing: The Rhetorical Situation when Writing on Demand," appears in *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Reading Perspectives and Practices*, edited by Bethan Marshall, Jackie Manuel, Donna Pasternak, and Jennifer Rowsell.

Aaron M. Schutz ('98) hopes everyone is doing well during this difficult time that is yet full of possibilities for change that seemed impossible only months ago. His department put enough of their courses online some years ago to allow students to complete the entire major/MS degree online. And since so many were already online when Covid hit, and because his faculty are pretty familiar with it, it was not a big challenge to deal with the switch. Personally, he dislikes teaching online, but their program might not still exist without it given the scheduling/travel struggles many students face, their full-time work, etc.

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The University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee has been encouraging most classes to go asynchronous online, but he has found that judicious use of some synchronous Zoom video meetings periodically feeds a real desire of students to engage face to face, even in classes that are officially fully asynchronous. Last semester he forgot about a Zoom meeting and came in a half hour late. The students were already well engaged with each other and seemed annoyed to have him there but had numerous suggestions about how he could fix limitations in the class. Another group kept meeting for three hours after he left, drinking wine and talking into the night. Too much Zoom is deadly. Too much asynchronous text discussion is isolating. His 2 cents.

Jennifer Sinor ('00) just completed 20 years at Utah State University—a staggering sum for a former military dependent. This fall, she published a new collection of essays entitled *Sky Songs: Meditations on Loving a Broken World* from the University of Nebraska Press. The essays span the past fifteen years of living in the West, moving from external landscapes to internal ones. Jennifer serves as the chair of creative writing at Utah State and teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in creative nonfiction. This year those courses are all on Zoom. While online learning may not be ideal for her, Jennifer is grateful for her job and the opportunity to talk with twenty-year-olds at this particular moment in history. They give her hope every single day.

In Saudi Arabia, **Emily Wilson** ('19) finds teaching online presents a host of new challenges. In Saudi culture, women are extremely concerned about having their faces or voices recorded and published online, so her students (all female) do not turn on their cameras and rarely turn on their microphones. Instead, they contribute by typing in the chat on Zoom. She reads their questions and comments out loud. It is the ultimate hub-and-spoke teaching, because they also send their comments and questions to her privately. So now, she has become...a podcaster. Emily talks to herself and stares at a sea of black screens, unable to tell if her students are confused, bored, engaged, outraged, amused, etc.

Lately, she has been relying on Google docs. She calls it a 'Digital Whiteboard,' and she encourage students to write things on the 'whiteboard' in response to her questions, or to post questions or comments of their own. It's a way to feel like someone out there is listening and an attempt to do formative assessment as much as she possibly can. Emily does not know about everyone else, but she sure could go for some before times.

Just as **Morris Young** ('97) is sure has been the case for many of you, at Wisconsin they had to transition from the emergency triage of the spring semester when everything was moved online over spring break to planning more intentionally for remote teaching in the fall. This involved planning and executing an online blended English 100 instructor training for new TAs, designing the first-year writing course for online delivery, and trying to prepare instructors to support students in a format that is more labor intensive for both instructors and students. While that initial transition has been a lot of work, they have learned for their work in the future is that a blend of asynchronous and live (or eventually in-person) instructor training can be highly effective.

In his own scholarly work, he has an essay forthcoming in a collection edited by Pat Bizzell and Lisa Zimmermanelli, “‘Not Light, but Fire’: Activist Issues and Contemporary Echoes in Nineteenth-Century American Rhetorics,” that examines the rhetorical work of the 19th C. Chinese American figure, Wong Chin Foo. He is also working on an essay about *English Composition as a Social Problem*, written by Sterling Andrus Leonard, who studied under Fred Newton Scott and was a faculty member at Wisconsin from 1920-1931.

Finally, this year he was appointed the inaugural Charles Q. Anderson Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This professorship was established by Dr. Erling Anderson, to honor his father, Charles Q. Anderson. Anderson credited his success as a clinical psychologist to his 1972 English degree from UW-Madison.



Angell Hall

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School of Education

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Stephen Dunning Student Support Fund

As you think about your end-of-year charitable contributions, please consider a gift to the Stephen Dunning Student Support Fund. This is the fund that supports special events, provides Chalk and Cheese refreshment, and, when monies permit, supplements research-related expenses for graduate students. Contributions of all sizes are most welcome. Write checks to the University of Michigan E&E Gift Account and send them to Jeanie Laubenthal, Joint Ph.D. Program in English & Education, 610 E. University, 4204 SEB, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259.