
Writing in the Profession

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Troy Andrews is an assistant professor of English at Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana. He is also a PhD student in Ball State University's Rhetoric and Composition department. Before teaching in higher education, he spent ten years teaching in the Indiana public school system. With a passion for teaching and people, he continues to explore and research multimodal assessments strategies for composition students at various levels of education. A lover of the Chicago Cubs and Bears, he also has a deep passion for being in the woods and on the water, as well as playing video games with his friends. Troy continues to live close to his hometown in rural Indiana with his wife and two daughters, who are the true source of all his power.



Cameron Becker is a fourth-year PhD student in Rhetoric and Composition at Ball State University, where she also serves as Graduate Assistant Director of the Writing Program. She is a graduate of Indiana University Kokomo and Indiana University East, where she studied Humanities, English Literature, and Composition Studies. Her scholarly interests include disability studies, online writing instruction, counterpublics, and rhetorics of craft. Cameron's dissertation research is a qualitative study examining how and why theories of embodiment are enacted in undergraduate online writing pedagogy. When she's not writing or teaching, she enjoys romance novels, Fall Out Boy, textile art, and spending time with her spouse and two dogs.



Mary Gilmore (she/her) is a fourth year PhD student in English Literature currently working on her dissertation in the field of nineteenth-century adaptation. She served as the chairperson for the 2022 Practical Criticism Midwest conference and has reviewed grants for the Ball State University Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA) since 2022. She is currently the Graduate Assistant Director for the Creative Writing Program at Ball State as well as the Managing Editor of Beautiful Things, a weekly online micro-essay magazine published by Ball State University.



Steve Lively is a graduate student working toward a doctorate in literature at Ball State University. He has been an Assistant Professor of English at Ivy Tech Community College in Fort Wayne, Indiana since 2016. Before that, he taught English/Language Arts at a rural public school in southern Indiana for seventeen years. His academic interests include pedagogical approaches for literature, composition, and creative writing courses; and contemporary American literature, with special interest in protest texts and the portrayals of masculinity in multiple text media. He has presented at CCCC (Pittsburgh, 2019) and the International David Foster Wallace Studies Conference (Austin, 2022). He and his two children live in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Deborah M. Mix is Professor of English and affiliate faculty in Women's and Gender Studies and African American Studies at Ball State University. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in American literature. She is the author of "*A Vocabulary of Thinking: Gertrude Stein and Contemporary North American Women's Innovative Writing*" (Iowa 2007) and, with Logan Esdale, the co-editor of *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Gertrude Stein* (MLA 2018). Her scholarship has also appeared in a variety of journals and edited collections.



Elizabeth Aderola Osifalajo is from Lagos, Nigeria. She obtained her bachelor's degree from Northern Kentucky University and in May 2023, she earned a dual master's degree MS in Chemistry and MA in English at Ball State University. She is currently working as a Research Assistant III at Cincinnati Children's Hospital. She believes her educational journey has been unique because she was very intentional about enjoying the process while also looking forward to each goal's final destination.

ENG 693: Writing in the Profession

Directed writing in some of the modes required in the academic profession of English studies, with a view toward producing effective, publishable prose.

When we came together in our class in fall 2021, we were a small but diverse group. I am a tenured and fully promoted faculty member who has watched the profession change considerably in the past two decades as I've guided a variety of students through their own graduate programs. Four students in the course were doctoral students, two studying literature (Mary and Steve) and two in rhetoric and composition (Troy and Cameron); the other three students were enrolled in master's programs in literature or English studies. Two of the doctoral students held full-time teaching jobs in our state's community college system (Troy and Steve); another doctoral student and two of the master's students held graduate assistantship positions in the English Department (including Cameron); a fourth (Elizabeth) held a graduate assistantship position in chemistry, where she is pursuing a master's degree alongside her English master's. Mary and Elizabeth are certain they want to pursue nonacademic career paths, but the others hope to stay in academic positions. Two of the students, including Troy, had taught in secondary schools, and one planned to return to that work after graduate school. Elizabeth and another student grew up outside the United States, while the other five students had been educated only in US institutions. Some of us had had careers outside academia—in addition to being secondary educators, Cameron had been a public librarian for nine years and Mary had worked in the corporate world—while others had been affiliated with academia, as students or teachers, almost exclusively.

In addition to the academic writing they were doing in our course and their other courses, some of the students were also engaged in other forms of writing, including fiction, blogs, and podcasts. And of course many of these students were teaching, tutoring, editing, and mentoring friends and family members in their own writing. They brought these ambitions and experiences into our class in a variety of ways, sharing their experiences and offering advice to one another. Our work for the semester revolved around creating a series of portfolios: a Conference Portfolio, a Journal Portfolio, and a Professional Identity Portfolio (see Appendix). My purpose in creating these assignments has always been to facilitate students' successful participation in the major discourses of academic life, but in recent years that purpose has expanded to include building students' confidence in navigating the professional world outside academia.

In the process of creating these portfolios, we found ourselves returning to some core issues: (1) our conflicting (and sometimes conflicted) identities as both writers and students; (2) the tensions we experience between concealing and celebrating our individuality and vulnerability; and (3) the transformative power of writing in a community. We share some of those conversations here.

BEING STUDENTS AND WRITERS AND TEACHING STUDENTS TO WRITE

Debbie: How does your identity as a student shape your sense of yourself as a writer? If you're also teaching (or have taught) writing, how does that affect the way you think of your own identity as a writer?

Troy: I've thought about this quite a bit, and I think I've got some preconceived notion that an academic or expert cannot simultaneously exist in the mind of a student. Sometimes it feels difficult to do the things I know I need to do as an academic while still being a student, but I'm trying to break that barrier down. Interestingly, a class that adapts itself to discussing that exact problem has been a wonderful catalyst.

Cameron: I totally agree! Karen Kelsky's description of academia's "collective overinvestment in impossibly high standards of expertise" really stands out to me (396). It feels like if we don't know *everything*, we don't know enough. And since it's impossible to know everything, it's easier to say we're not yet ready to write the piece of scholarship we want to write. The identity of a teacher or a student is much easier to embody than that of a writer or disciplinary insider. Megan E. Cowie, Logan J. Nealis, Simon B. Sherry, Paul L. Hewitt, and Gordon L. Flett have investigated this kind of "[p]erfectionistic self-presentation" and the way it falls on graduate students in particular (224). We think we have to be infallible, which isn't healthy for us psychologically or professionally. This perfectionism makes us vulnerable in ways that can keep us from putting our work out there or even from seeing clearly that other scholars or other articles aren't perfect.

Mary: Cameron's sentiment about the impossible standard of knowing everything, especially while pursuing a graduate degree,

is so applicable to me! Just the thought of what it would take to achieve total expertise in my field can diminish my confidence in a matter of seconds. As an emerging scholar and teacher, I know this type of thinking is toxic to the writing process and to the classroom environment. In an attempt to remedy some of these feelings, I have been reading the work of scholars who believe meaningful reader and student engagement is possible without “knowing it all.” For example, in *How Humans Learn*, Joshua R. Eyler discusses (through a neuroscientific lens) the role of curiosity in the learning-acquisition process and how lecture-based instruction can shut down curiosity in ways that inhibit memory, and thus retention, in the brain (38). Reading Eyler (and others) has recalibrated my intense feelings of academic stage fright (on the page and in the classroom) by reinforcing the idea that being the “sage on the stage” isn’t the goal of writing or teaching. Rather, it’s the exchange of knowledge with readers and students that makes the work meaningful.

Elizabeth: I also think it can be difficult to simultaneously be the student, who is expected not to know everything, and the teacher, who is expected to be the expert. The dynamic is especially difficult in graduate school, where graduate students are expected to be learning everything. Of course, as Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle point out, there’s a lot of “gatekeeping” and apprenticeship at work in academic writing. They write, “The extent to which we align ourselves with a particular community . . . can be gauged by the extent to which we are able and willing to use that community’s language, make its rhetorical moves, act with its privileged texts, and participate in its writing processes and practices” (51). This gatekeeping adds to my struggle with being heard as the writer who does not know everything and still wants to learn but has to put on the façade of an expert. It’s no surprise that impostor syndrome—sorry, phenomenon!—will trickle in uninvited.

Debbie: Thank you for shifting your language, Elizabeth. Calling it a phenomenon rather than a syndrome avoids pathologizing what are very natural worries. Natalie M. Houston argues that “phenomenon” helps us see “the larger structural contexts in which individuals are situated and the discursive frameworks through which they perceive their experience” (75). We’ve been talking about those kinds of frameworks—especially the way perfectionism and unrealistic ideas about expertise can paralyze us so that we don’t even try to publish.

Troy: You’re absolutely right, Debbie. I had never considered the word “syndrome” in context with my own (or anybody’s) academic insecurities as a negative term prior to the class where it came up. What I think is perhaps telling is that we did consider and implement that shift, and we did so through collective and thoughtful reasoning. Signs to me that suggest we are all doing just fine. I also find Houston helpful here. She states, “One of the hallmarks of impostor phenomenon . . . is the attribution of one’s successes to luck or connections rather than one’s qualifications” (77). I think a lot of us wrestle with this tendency, but research suggests this

struggle is not unusual. I appreciate knowing a lot of us have that experience.

Debbie: Troy is right that naming and talking about our fears around academic writing and expertise seemed cathartic. Houston’s advice to test the story we’re spinning—“Is it true?”—has been useful to me. She points out that “the impostor mind will try to persuade you that it is, of course, true that you are a fraud,” in which case we can try imagining the reverse: “What if the opposite were true? How would I support that claim?” (79). I ask those questions a lot when students or friends confess they’re doubting themselves. I’m not always as good about posing those questions to myself when I’m feeling like a fraud, but I’m working on it.

Mary: For me, impostor phenomenon surfaces in two main ways: What if my colleagues realize I’m a fraud because my idea is unoriginal or has already been written about, or what if my students think I’m a fraud because my syllabus reveals my academic weak spots? Mostly, these feelings are internal and revved up by negative self-talk. This cycle, in part, goes back to the idea that we should (or could) know it all, but I also feel an intense responsibility, especially as a teacher, to make sure I have thought of *everything*. How do I choose course texts when the canon is full of hegemonic potholes? How do I design assignments that lift all student voices and encourage the development of student citizenship? How do I navigate the politics inside and outside the classroom? How do I engage the learning styles of my students and encourage them to flex their metacognitive muscles during my class and beyond? You get the picture. It turns out that asking my doubt to politely go away is ineffective, so I try to remind myself we are all doing the best we can, and—like Debbie—I’m working on it.

INDIVIDUALITY AND VULNERABILITY

Steve: I wonder where the dynamic of control comes into our conversation about feeling like an impostor or not. What about situations where I’m the arbiter of what’s acceptable or legitimate? As an educator, even if I’m taking into consideration what a student might need from a composition class, I’m still the authority in the room and have the power to classify something as satisfactory or otherwise. But as an academic, I’m waiting for someone else to validate my work, to accept it or publish it, which takes the control out of my hands. But even though I feel less authoritative in those contexts, I do not usually show that side to my students.

Mary: Steve brings up a great point. Control is such a loaded topic, especially in academia. Even in the most student-centered classrooms, students intrinsically understand the teacher controls the curriculum design, attendance policies, assessment criteria, etc. So, there is already some slippage in the idea that the power dynamic can be absent from the classroom. In fact, Steven D. Brookfield believes pretending it doesn’t exist only creates suspicion since “experience has taught them [students] that teachers

who act as if power isn't in the room often use it in subtle and insidious ways to penalize and reward" (239). Maybe it's useful in our context to think about how the power is wielded (by us or towards us) rather than who holds it?

Elizabeth: Steve, I like your point about control since if I can believe I have some control in a situation, I can take more responsibility to bring things to completion. This is what Kelsky means by taking control of your CV—to control the aspects of your career you can control (93). The place I feel like academia romanticizes control is in the idea that you need to be an expert to have control. But that's not true. Being an expert requires embracing change and growing with it, and that can mean letting go of control as needed.

Steve: That reminds me of a couple of conversations I've had with students lately that make me think my role is less writing expert and more writing motivator for my students. But when it comes to being a writing motivator for myself, I get stuck worrying about being an expert. I want to add to the conversation and not just repeat what's already been said about a subject, but then how do I make sure I'm not repeating something? I feel obligated to make sure I've read all the existing material before I can write my own. Maybe I'm taking us back to impostor phenomenon.

Cameron: I like that you bring up mentoring here as part of your scholarly and writerly identity, Steve. I feel most like a writer when I'm working in community with others, giving and receiving feedback. Being a good writing motivator or facilitator is an important part of our role as teachers. Even though I write every day, I need a human sounding board for my writing to feel real.

Troy: There is always this sounding-board idea to take into consideration, Cameron. I think what is most important to me is that as my role as a writing instructor evolves, so too does my life as an academic. It was hard to make the transition from being a teacher of writing to being a student again, maybe because for about a decade, I was in charge of up to a hundred students' writing at any given time. It's that control issue Steve mentioned—I was their sounding board, but they weren't mine . . . but maybe they should have been? Next fall ('23) I will begin my fifteenth year teaching English, and if I have learned one thing in that time, it is that students come with remarkable backgrounds, gifts, ideas, and perspectives that are always useful in some capacity. I wonder what I left behind by not writing alongside them? I wonder if I had been more transparent in my own writing, and especially my failures, would that have sparked something for them?

Elizabeth: I have seen myself as a writer since I was young—my friends would take turns reading the stories I wrote. I have never seen myself as a scholar and only occasionally seen myself as a teacher. If I'm honest, I don't feel like I belong in academia because I don't aspire to be a scholar.

Debbie: Elizabeth is reminding us of the role of pleasure, isn't she? We've been talking about control and expertise, but what about the fun side of reading and writing and teaching?

Troy: I came to English studies late after a wild battle with chemistry, and I often felt behind in most of my classes as a result. This feeling lasted well into my MA, and distance and time got the best of my confidence. It just felt like everyone was talking about theories and authors I had never heard of before. I feel like I've caught up quite nicely, but finding that sense of belonging was frustrating and occasionally came at the cost of finding pleasure in my work because I was more set on proving I belonged than simply learning. Fear of failure is no joke at any level. In the book *Naming What We Know*, Adler-Kassner and Wardle say that "students are more likely to avoid risking failure for fear of damaging their grades, and this fear works against the learning process" (63). I truly felt that fear, and sometimes I still do.

Cameron: Yes—the time and resources we commit to graduate education can make it feel like our work has to be super formal and steeped in theory. But writing studies scholarship like bell hooks's *All About Love: New Visions* and Sami Schalk's pleasure activism remind us we can find joy and pleasure in writing to explore vulnerable, personal aspects of our shared interests, identities, and experiences. I've been working on a project on the pandemic-era boom in self-published alien romance, and part of my argument is that there's a lot of value in playfulness and healthy escapism during difficult times.

Mary: Cameron's idea really resonates with me. When I feel overwhelmed by grad school, I try to remember what it felt like to be a kid—like Elizabeth—who just loved to read and write before the anxieties of earning money, publishing, and deadlines entered the equation. When I can tap into those feelings, it's easier to keep going. One of the things I love about being in grad school is being in community with other writers. It gives me life to hear people talk about their interests with such passion!

Elizabeth: I totally agree that enjoyment can come from learning with others. In *How to Write a Lot*, Paul J. Silvia emphasizes the importance of having a writing group: "If you're a grad student, you probably have a lot of friends facing the same challenges, so why not found a group? Starting a student-only group is a great way for students to stay focused on their long-range projects, lend each other support, and justify buying the bigger box of doughnuts" (49). Personally, I believe the sense of belonging that comes from a writing community brings the type of happiness I can enjoy no matter where I am in my writing process.

WRITING IN/AS COMMUNITY

Debbie: Virginia Woolf famously argues a writer must have a "room of one's own" and an income to make writing possible. What do

you know about what you want or need in your life to be a writer or creator?

Troy: In the past, I would have said I needed accountability just to get the planning process started. The roles of student, instructor, administrator, husband, father, and so forth just overwhelmed my time. But I've been reconnecting with the idea that accountability comes from within, although I fully understand the notion of group accountability as well. Silvia says that "[a]ccountability is all that most people need out of a writing group" and that "many of us could use a nudge to stick to our schedule" (50). I think I need a little of both, and I'm still wrestling with which has the greater impact.

Cameron: Yes. I think something I learned about myself as a writer is that I'm more confident and generative when I have someone to bounce ideas off of, or someone who's regularly responding to my writing. I never thought of myself as a collaborative writer before, but I've realized a collaborator—or even just an accountability partner—can function as a friendly, informed audience, which helps me get into the right cognitive and emotional space for taking risks and engaging with new ideas in my writing. Sue Wilson and Jennifer Cutri point out that for graduate students, "writing networks provide solidarity and a rewarding forum for transactional learning processes within a community of like-minded experts" and that there's "moral support and understanding of similar experiences" in those groups (59). That's absolutely been true for me.

Debbie: We tried what Jackie Grutsch McKinney calls "proximal writing" in our class last fall. According to a forthcoming article by Grutsch McKinney, proximal writing is "writing done purposefully in the presence of others who are writing." It's different from a draft group, where people are exchanging and commenting on one another's writing, which is what Silvia recommends. Wilson and Cutri seem to be talking about both the kind of exchange that happens in a draft group and the kind of community that can emerge through proximity. Proximal writing can be a way to make the solitary work of writing feel a little less lonely.

Cameron: Mary and I have kept up our twice-a-week proximal writing meetings since our class together ended. We're in different areas—rhetoric and composition and literature—so I initially thought our meetings would mostly be just about accountability. But we've been surprised by how often we find connections. Writing for me has often been a solitary endeavor, so I wasn't expecting how much growth I would experience, both in my understanding of my work and in my ability to articulate my ideas, once I started writing with a partner.

Mary: I really enjoyed the proximal-writing exercises in class, so I knew it could be a generative practice. What I didn't expect when Cameron and I started meeting outside class was that my definition of a productive writing session would expand to include things that didn't necessarily end up on the page. Many of our (seemingly disparate) conversations have worked themselves into

my thoughts and my writing. Sometimes we sit side by side and write, and other times, we brainstorm together for hours—without judgment if we get off topic—staying open to the creative possibilities that might (and often do) emerge. I have to say it feels a little meta right now writing in this article about writing with Cameron, who is also writing about our process.

Elizabeth: The value of proximal writing depends on where I am in my writing process and what I want to achieve. While brainstorming, I've gotten used to isolating myself when I need inspiration—that's what works for me. But writing alongside others is highly beneficial when I have an idea outlined or drafted and I need the motivation to keep going. This is why I believe people like me benefit most from what Silvia calls "proximal goal setting": "a concrete [short-term] goal . . . such as making an outline, finishing a section of a manuscript, reading a book, or writing 1,000 words. These are tangible—you'll know if you didn't do it" (51).

Steve: At the end of an advanced creative-writing class I taught this semester via Zoom, I was completely caught off guard by one of my students. She mentioned how much she had enjoyed the weekly discussions and workshop sessions due in large part to the number of ideas the entire group shared for each submitted work. Then, a second student suggested we continue meeting online (via social networking) to continue this type of support. In short, I was instantly reminded of the value of being active in a writing community. For too long I have isolated myself and all but hidden my works in progress because they were never ready. This approach, I've of course learned, is simply not an effective strategy to build confidence in my own writing. I would never encourage a student to hole up in that manner and simply hope for the best. Between the graduate course and leading my own writing community as a college course, I have finally let go of the isolated writer I once was.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Debbie: I'm wondering where we are here at the end of this conversation? Steve, I know you submitted a paper to a conference and had it accepted—congratulations! Cameron's putting the finishing touches on a couple articles and a collaborative book chapter. Mary's just finished her comprehensive exams, and Cameron, Troy, and Steve are all heading for exams in the coming year. Elizabeth's retooling her website and will be writing her master's thesis. Troy, Cameron, and Steve will continue teaching, too. What advice do you have for each other or yourselves?

Troy: For me, what was once rather murky has filtered into something fairly clear at this point when it comes to pressing on, which is that we must . . . keep . . . writing. Do it as much as you can, and consider doing it in different ways. For example, while I still lean on the late-night deep dive on my PC (everybody else is asleep at this time in my house so it just works for me), the proximal-writing

exercise we completed, as inspired by Grutsch McKinney's research, was far more wonderful than I expected. There is truly something special about writing in the company of so many great minds, and it almost felt borderline spiritual ("where two or three gather together . . ."). The energy was palpable, and I'll never forget it, and it is something I hope to recreate this summer as I begin work on another project with a colleague and a mentor. There are of course a lot of factors here, such as pondering audience or targeting a particular journal if you're looking for publication (Silvia 76), and while I will emphasize the importance of these suggestions, my main point here is to write in whatever way you can and do it as often as you can.

Steve: I'm planning to present my paper in early June in Austin, Texas. The conference coordinator also encouraged me to submit the paper to their society's annual journal publication for consideration. As Debbie pointed out, we as writers need to remember the worst thing that can happen when we submit a conference paper or article—a rejection or "We appreciate your submission; however . . ." email—will leave us exactly as we were *before* we submitted it. As for general advice, I will share the analogy I have used as a teacher, which is something along the lines of continuously tossing darts at a dartboard. Some hit the wall at first, but with practice and persistence, one of those darts will eventually hit the center. Also, and this is perhaps the best advice I have gained in the past year: rejection is never personal.

Troy: That's such a great point about rejection, Steve, and I think it applies to other facets of this academic process as well. The imposter phenomenon we've described here is unlikely to be a concept that disappears as another set of students take our place, so if there is a chance a message like this can reach those writers, I think they'll be much better off because of it. I also know this mentality will be useful as I consider my next steps in academia (or outside it) in terms of a career trajectory. Alex Galarza says about his own journey, "[I was] determined not to let my success or failure in securing a tenure-track position impact my long-term happiness" (216). Considering I just finished as a runner-up for such a position, it is easy to get down, but the right mentality towards the rejection you mention here is essential. No, I did not get the job, but I beat out an awful lot of folks in my very first tenure-level application, and a lot of them already have their PhDs. I was able to experience my first campus visit and the eight-or-so-hour interview process that went along with it. Sure, I am sad I did not get the job, but what I learned from that rejection will be eternally valuable for me. I will, to quote Galarza once again, keep working on "transforming the inevitable despair and grimness into something positive and productive" (220). As dreary as that sounds, the smile on my face suggests otherwise.

Cameron: I really needed to hear what Troy and Steve are saying about failure and rejection. Given the demands on our time and energy as graduate students, it's hard to find time for low-stakes, personal writing. So I think my best advice is to guard the things

that bring you joy. It's tempting to turn personal writing into another aspect of your academic hustle—and that can be really rewarding, too!—but there's value in writing for pleasure and just for yourself. It's writing that you can't fail at, or that can't be rejected, because it's an act of self-care and self-expression.

Elizabeth: In addition to what my peers have already mentioned, I believe community is an essential part of the writing process, and this can mean a proximal-writing group for some or a draft-exchange group for others. Whatever the case, I highly recommend becoming a part of a community where you can be encouraged to serve. Also, imposter phenomenon is real, and I can say with confidence that each of us has had our own fair share of it, but it is important to recognize you are not alone. As you make the decision to step out of your comfort zone, believe you have what it takes and give yourself enough time and space to grow and evolve. Thank you very much, Debbie, for this conversation. This has been a great conversation, and I wish everyone the very best in all their future endeavors!

Mary: For me, Debbie's course was transformative. There is a reason we still have plenty to say about it nearly a year later. We produced several academic and professional documents that will be invaluable to our endeavors for years to come. Within this supportive group environment, people generously gave (and received) feedback that resulted in the type of revisions I, no doubt, could not have done on my own. Since this class has ended, I have said yes to all manner of campus writing challenges, started working as the managing editor of a campus publication, and (as you know) continued my proximal-writing practice with Cameron. I will start writing my dissertation soon, and have been warned it can be a lonely endeavor, but I feel this course has helped equip me with the tools I need to avoid some of those writing pitfalls. As we go in different professional and academic directions, my advice would be to continue to build on all the valuable writing practices we learned in class and to say yes to the writing opportunities that come along.

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Appendix

The work in this class builds on existing writing done for previous courses in the students' graduate programs. Students are asked to choose a paper or project they are pleased with and that relates to their professional aspirations as the basis for these assignments. These portfolios have also evolved through collaboration with other faculty members who have taught this course at Ball State, including Kristie Fleckenstein, Jennifer Grouling, and Jackie Grutsch McKinney, and feedback from the graduate students who have taken the course with us over the years. Assignments for our class were gathered into three portfolios:

Conference Portfolio: includes a list of potential conferences with submission information and identification of a target conference; an abstract appropriate for submission to the target conference; the conference presentation itself; and the delivery of the presentation to the class.

Journal Portfolio: includes a list of target journals and submission information; analyses of articles from recent issues of the target journal; drafts in progress for the journal; and a future-steps letter identifying the remaining work to be done before the article is ready to submit.

Professional Identity Portfolio: includes a CV or resume as appropriate to the students' professional goals; a list of transferable skills; a report on an informational interview; a grant application or professional website; a diversity statement; and a three- or five-year plan.

The contents of each portfolio were developed recursively and in conversation with one another and with a number of articles and other resources shared in class.

Conference Dossier for #ActuallyAutistic: Rhetoricity, Self-Advocacy, and the Emergence of a Counterpublic

Cameron Becker

Course Design: Conference Portfolio

Professor: Deborah Mix

Course: ENG693



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scholarly interests include disability studies, online writing instruction, counterpublics, and rhetorics of craft. Cameron's dissertation research is a qualitative study examining how and why theories of embodiment are enacted in undergraduate online writing pedagogy. When she's not writing or teaching, she enjoys romance novels, Fall Out Boy, textile art, and spending time with her spouse and two dogs.

CONFERENCE LIST

1. **Computers and Writing 2022: Practicing Digital Activisms***
2. RAW 2022: Research, Art, & Writing Graduate Student Conference
3. Disability at the Intersection of History, Culture, Religion, Gender, and Health
4. MCLLM 30: "Tough But Necessary" Conversations
5. SESAS 2021: ...and Reimagining, Recentering, Reconstructing a Broken System...

*I presented this paper virtually at Computers and Writing 2022.

COMPUTERS AND WRITING 2022: PRACTICING DIGITAL ACTIVISMS

1. Conference Information
[Computers and Writing 2022: Practicing Digital Activisms](#) will be held at East Carolina University in Greenville, NC, from May 19-22, 2022.
2. Submission Requirements
C&W 2022's [call for papers](#) requires individual presenters to submit a 75-100-word abstract and a 250-word proposal,



Abstract

#ActuallyAutistic is a controversial activist hashtag which spans multiple social media sites and is intended for the exclusive use of autistic individuals to share resources, build community, and engage in self-advocacy. The hashtag was created as a direct response to ableism and abuse from mainstream autism advocacy organizations like Autism Speaks and online environments like #autism. A prominent demographic in the #ActuallyAutistic community is late-diagnosed autistic women who use the hashtag to learn about resources and coping strategies that are otherwise inaccessible to them.

By exploring the history of the hashtag, I argue that #ActuallyAutistic functions as a digital counterpublic, described by Nancy Fraser as "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs," because of the identities of the participants, the subaltern nature of autism self-advocacy, and the characteristics of the discourse occurring on the hashtag. I also analyze Tweets from #ActuallyAutistic community members using M. Remi Yergeau's framework of neuroqueer rhetoric to further argue that this community merits more thorough academic study as a site of rhetorical invention by minority rhetors which can help scholars develop new ways of documenting, studying, and understanding disability self-advocacy rhetoric. Finally, by connecting the rhetorics of self-advocacy on #ActuallyAutistic with the recruiting and lobbying activities of organizations like Autistic Self-Advocacy Network and Autistic Women and Non-binary Network, I explore the tangible positive effects of the autism self-advocacy counterpublic on the lived experiences of autistic individuals.

as well as any content warnings and accessibility considerations for their presentation. C&W 2022 also asks that potential presenters specify whether they plan to attend the conference in person, or if their presentation will be given virtually/asynchronously. Interested parties should submit their abstract and proposal by November 1, 2021, through [this link](#).

3. Rationale

The theme for this year's conference is "Practicing Digital Activisms," and one of the topic questions was, "In what ways can or do memes, videos, Facebook posts, images, tweets, video games, GIFs, or hashtags contribute to digital activism?" The call for papers also states that the conference will "welcome all kinds of examples and projects that explicitly practice, promote, and analyze digital activism toward social justice." Because my conference paper analyzes the digital counterpublic #ActuallyAutistic as a site of rhetorical invention for minority rhetors and the organization of autistic people for the purpose of advocating for autistic rights and representation, this conference seems to be a good fit.

RAW: RESEARCH, ART, & WRITING GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE

1. Conference Information

The University of Texas at Dallas will host the hybrid conference [RAW: Research, Art, and Writing Graduate Student Conference](#) on February 12, 2022.

2. Submission Requirements

The [call for papers](#) for the RAW academic conference requires a title for the submission, a 250-300-word abstract, three to five keywords, a brief biography, and an indication of whether the presenter will attend virtually or in-person. Submissions are due by November 19, 2021, via [this link](#).

3. Rationale

The RAW academic conference is described as a being "organized by and for graduate student scholars to engage in scholarly and creative conversations with peers across the various fields of the humanities." The theme in 2022 is "Perceptions on Time, Space, and Subjectivity," and the call for papers requested "scholarly papers and creative projects that address how we engage/disengage with reality, see ourselves and the world around us, and look to the past to understand our present and/or future." Because my paper includes themes of self-representation in digital spaces and environments, and because it traces the autism self-advocacy movement through its brief history, I felt that it might qualify. The conference is being presented in a hybrid format in 2022, which is excellent for my accessibility needs; however, I am from Dallas and have a lot of family in the area,

so if I am well, I would be tempted to brave the nightmare that is commercial travel to attend in-person.

DISABILITY AT THE INTERSECTION OF HISTORY, CULTURE, RELIGION, GENDER, AND HEALTH

1. Conference Information

This [conference](#) is being hosted by Marquette University in Milwaukee, WI, on March 3-4, 2022. The conference is being offered in hybrid format.

2. Submission Requirements

According to the conference's [cfp](#), "Abstracts up to 300 words in Word format must be submitted through [the electronic system](#) by October 31, 2021."

3. Rationale

This conference encourages graduate student submissions and specifically requests papers "dealing with normalcy narratives, discourse, and issues of stigmas evolving around disabilities in marginalized communities with an emphasis on the intersection of disability (as an identity and minority) with gender, culture, and religion." My paper studies a counterpublic intended to challenge neurological normalcy narratives and stigma via self-advocacy discourse, so I believe it would be a good match for this conference. To address their prompt about the intersection of disability and gender, I could also make some edits to my paper to discuss the fact that women and girls with autism go undiagnosed for much longer than men due to gender bias in diagnostic criteria. The counterpublic I'm studying is invaluable for autistic women and nonbinary people because the way autism presents in women is misunderstood and poorly documented, so community-based research and crowdsourced coping strategies are often the only resources at their disposal. The hybrid nature of the conference is a bonus for me.

MCLLM 30: "TOUGH BUT NECESSARY CONVERSATIONS"

1. Conference Information

The 30th annual Midwestern Conference on Literature, Language, and Media will be held in hybrid format in DeKalb, Illinois. Surprisingly, neither the [cfp](#) nor the [conference website](#) shared the date of the 2022 conference.

2. Submission Requirements

According to the call for papers, proposals should include a cover page with the applicant's name, institutional affiliation, status, email, and phone number, as well as a 200-500-word proposal and information about whether the applicant would

prefer to present online or in person. Proposals are due to [this email](#) by December 18, 2021.

3. Rationale

This conference seemed more established and like a bit of a long shot, but I was intrigued by the theme and believe that my paper addresses some of the suggested topics like “rhetoric in relation to social justice” and “marginalized voices and challenges to the canon.” The cfp asks for papers that “address socio-cultural or political issues as they relate to matters of social justice and how language, literature, and media work for, with, or in some cases against the ideals of social justice.” My examination of the relationship between public and counterpublic autism advocacy rhetorics seeks to accomplish that goal. I like that this is a hybrid conference, although it’s not too far to drive.

SESAS 2021: ...AND REIMAGINING, RECENTERING, RECONSTRUCTING A BROKEN SYSTEM...

1. Conference Information

[Students of English Studies Association Symposium 2021](#) will be held on Zoom on Thursday, December 9, 2021, and Friday, December 10, 2021.

2. Submission Requirements

The [cfp](#) states that abstracts of 200-300 words and short biographies are due on Friday, November 5, 2021, to [this email address](#).

3. Rationale

This conference seemed like an excellent fit for my paper because it’s a free conference on Zoom and some of the suggested topics include “Rhetorical movements in the social, cultural, and political space” and “Social and Digital movements.” The call for papers says that the organizers “aren’t looking for solutions to problems, but rather a way to visualize a future *reconstructed*.” I thought that worked well with my discussion of the Neurodiversity Movement in particular because the movement (and the counterpublic, as a part of the movement) resists the idea that autism is a disease to be cured (or a problem to be fixed), and seeks to reconstruct our social and cultural understanding of what autism and autism advocacy look like.

Journal Analysis Letter Update

Troy Andrews

Course Design: Journal Portfolio

Professor: Deborah Mix

Course: ENG693



Troy Andrews is an assistant professor of English at Ivy Tech Community College in Indiana. He is also a PhD student in Ball State University's Rhetoric and Composition department. Before teaching in higher education, he spent ten years teaching in the Indiana public school system. With a passion for teaching and people, he continues to

explore and research multimodal assessments strategies for composition students at various levels of education. A lover of the Chicago Cubs and Bears, he also has a deep passion for being in the woods and on the water, as well as playing video games with his friends. Troy continues to live close to his hometown in rural Indiana with his wife and two daughters, who are the true source of all his power.

Dear Dr. Mix,

This article has come a very long way since its inception. In what started out as a seminar paper for another course, this article has dropped from nearly 8,000 words down to 5,000, and now down to around 3,000. Considering most of the articles I've used in this activity live in the 2,500 or so word mark, I feel like I'm very close to where I want it to be length wise. The process of revision and peer editing has been exhausting, to be honest, but I feel like my peer group has given me some strong suggestions that have allowed this content crush to work without taking away too much meaning.

That said, there is quite a bit to do yet, though not necessarily items that will take a ton of time. In fact, I hope to submit this to WCC over break and go from there. Before I do, however, I will take the following steps:

1. As noted by my peers, right now the essay is making serious strides to fit into the realm of WCC desired content, especially as it pertains to inclusivity. That is the good news. The bad news is that, if I compare my essay at present to the journals I studied for this assignment, **it feels less personal on my end and more of a commentary on rural agrarian sponsorship**. I want the latter to exist, but by the journal's self-described "about

me" page, I need to get it a little more aligned with my own experiences as a writer if this essay wants a chance. I don't find this to be a great challenge, but when you've already cut down the content by over half, you find yourself constantly battling for what goes in and what doesn't make the cut. Also, there is task of suggesting how this changed me as a writer, too. With that addition, which I think I can complete easily enough, I feel like I am getting quite close to a permissible submission.

2. I have created an abstract for this piece, and it is a highly edited and largely condensed version of what I used for my earlier project in this course. I simply used what I found in the WCC articles to help me align it appropriately. It's not done yet, but close.
3. While the document is in line in terms of style, formatting, length (as non is presented as a limit), etc, it is in a *dire need of basic editing*. To accommodate this, I have two people, one a classmate here, the other an instructor with many submissions to their name, ready to read over it. They have agreed to provide an extra set of eyes for me before I submit to WCC.
4. I need to find an appropriate picture to send in. I have a basic profile picture I use for school, but I'm not sure it's what I want here. Professional pictures are great, but I almost want something more...personal for this.

In short, all of these matter to me, but I have my current priorities set on #1 and #4. Again, I feel like I can do this and have a submission in over break and before we return to spring classes, and I am so very thrilled to take this jump.

Lastly, I know you wanted this to be a "polished" as possible, but where it sits now is where it must sit for at least another week on my end. In full transparency, the last four months have been the most challenging four months of my life in terms of education and work...even more so than when my oldest had her open heart surgeries. Those were at least somewhat predictable, and I had a singular occupation where I was able to rely on many others to let me focus on my child. Now, I have so many other responsibilities. I teach at two different colleges, I'm trying to finish another degree,

both my children have special needs, we are single income, etc.... In short, the pressure can be quite daunting. It has been absolutely relentless, be it my own health, my kids, or something else. I had almost convinced myself to take the spring off, but, for better or for worse, this class has given me the energy and focus to keep going. I started this journey **for me** and for me alone. I'm here to

prove something to myself. I have a lot of work to do on this journal article as of yet, but I'm aware of the steps, and I am prepared to complete it by a set date.

Thank you,
Troy Andrews

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Journal Analysis\

LIST OF POTENTIAL JOURNALS

- *Writers: Craft & Context* (Target journal)
- *Nation Council of Teachers of English: Teaching English in the Two Year College*
- *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education: English/Language Arts Education*

WRITERS: CRAFT & CONTEXT

EDITORS: JOURNAL EDITORS: MICHELE EODICE, AJA MARTINEZ, SANDRA TARABOCHIA

EMAIL:WRITERSCRAFTANDCONTEXT@GMAIL.COM

- The Journal does not list a size limit for submission, but does request a letter that includes an introduction of yourself, the genre you're submitting, and "context" about yourself, including demographical information •
- Abstract is not required. No acceptance rate listed. Must be original work not submitted elsewhere.
- Submission must be Word/PDF. URLs in references if possible. Double spaced, 12-point font. Illustrations/figures/tables within the text. (alt options available upon approval)
- Digital submission. Single issue sent inside "submissions." Sponsored by Oklahoma University Writing Center.
- No specific omission suggestions, possibly due to the nature of the journal. In fact, each of the three journals I read for this assignment even include author images.
- To submit, register on the "submissions" link in the "About" tab

- Note: Users must email the editorial team first (info in "contact" link under "About." Perspective user will be sent temporary login.

Recent Issue Analysis

- For this journal, as it is built upon the experiences of writers, the topics and style range quite a bit. That said, there is certainly a level of counterstory present, and there is a strong effort to publish work from writers of different kinds of backgrounds. In the essays I scanned ("Refusing to Kill My Darlings," "Five Pictures of my Son," and "On Becoming a Research Geek"), each provided deeply personal aspects of the lives of a writer, how this kind of context can affect a writer, and how others might learn from and/or navigate this for themselves. In short, these very personal articles (which even contain dialogue) offer an angle of approach that makes a great deal of sense for my own article as a former K 12 teacher. I believe my article addresses some left out and otherwise ignored potential learning content for students, and while it is not as directly representative of me (like the articles mentioned above), it has changed my approach as an educator.

TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE TWO YEAR COLLEGE: NCTE

EDITOR: DARIN JENSON

EMAIL:TETYC.EDITOR@GMAIL.COM

- 4000–7000-word scholarly articles in all areas of English, specific to TYC, published by NCTE. Also 750–4000 word notes on approaches and activities, 2000 3000 word review essays on a theme are also possible, and symposiums at 2000 4000 words. Published in September, December, March, and May
- Pages must be numbered, and under article title must be a single sentence description of article. MLA 8th edition style required. Author's name/institution should not appear on any

pages. There are special instructions available for the need to include student work samples/references

- 3–4 month review process. Encourages first time authors. Must be original work. Differing rates on acceptance, ranging 15% (not dated) to 12.9% in 2019 for first time submissions. Revisions up to 60%, per their website (annual report overall for NCTE)
- A \$75 fee for access for nonmembers, \$25 for members (NCTE). I cannot find exact acceptance rates or return on submission information other than the return timeline varies per call and ranges pending when the journal is published. The webpage containing some of this info “does not exist,” as linked here: <https://ncte.org/resources/journals/teaching-english-in-the-two-yearcollege/>

- Length varies, ranging from two pages to 50, with 30 a suggested limit. Longer articles should have subheads. No title sheets. No hard copies.
- Must be original work not submitted elsewhere. Include a 75–200 word abstract.
- Must follow most recent APA edition style. Word or RTF only. 12-pt font, double spaced.
- Very strong warning on proper English, including a reference to assist nonnative English speakers. No style options, such as strike through/comments/etc.
- Double blind review, no name included anywhere. Submissions will be reviewed “as promptly s possible,” and this usually takes around five months.

Recent Issue Analysis

- The most current issue of TETYC contains articles on student feedback, diverse teaching approaches, corequisite models for courses, and antiracism. Different than *WCC*, these articles differ in their structure and even in their authorship, as here we see several articles authored by several cowriters. In terms of content, it is specifically linked to the practice of teaching, ranging from active feedback techniques (“Transforming the Feedback Paradigm”) to more theory based support (Review: “Linguistic Justice: Black Language, Literacy, Identity, and Pedagogy”). The latter of the two is still clearly bound in pedagogy, but more specifically lensed in theory/ counterstory than more qualitative data feedback ideas in general course pedagogies. Not all articles are free/open access and some require a registered user to read. Several had subheadings and data charts (“The Teaching Zone: Square Pegs in Round Holes”).

Recent Issue Analysis

- This Journal, which does largely ask its writers to focus on some aspect of technology in addition to ELA and teaching, unsurprisingly has a lot of articles on teaching with technology, distance education, and using “computational” skills to more effectively engage in professional development. Like TETYC, articles are often coauthored, but unlike TETYC (and *WCC*), the presentation of the English articles, while categorized together, are clumped in with all other disciplines as well (located at the top above Math and Science). As such, only two articles are in the current issue. Per these English/English education articles, the focus is not on rhetoric and composition, but either on literature or basic literacy courses. Both articles are quite large, contain a lot of citations, and also they suggested subtitles (and both include data references for the technology aspect). Older issues contain articles on marginalized voice and other similar areas.

CITE JOURNAL: CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHER EDUCATION: ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

EDITOR: T. PHILIP NICHOLS

EMAIL:PHIL_NICHOLS@BAYLOR.EDU

- Content must reference ELA, Technology, and English Teacher Education. Published by The Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.
- Online format encouraged, including links/videos/sound/ other interactives. Instructions provided on how to do it. Published in March, June, September, and December. Acceptance rate of 29%.

WRITERS: CRAFT & CONTEXT

Zeroing In: Single Article Analysis

- Article: “Refusing to Kill My Darlings” by Lisa Lebduska
- Lebduska’s article, which begins very frankly by addressing the nature of the article’s title, using a past tense recollection of a graduate school experience, using very detailed imagery to set a scene for a clearly significant event in her life. Addressing the “deep voiced, tall white man,” a scene she describes as all too familiar, she talks about how she fit the mold of what was “successful” and addresses her known privilege in being white. Naturally, she takes this man’s advice to “kill her darlings.” She questions her career choice

versus what her family wanted. She wants to be seen as “hip” by students. Privilege allows her to “avoid thinking about what revising takes out of writers,” especially diverse writers. Killing your darlings only marginalizes them further, then. She then provides some scholarship to back that up. If we aren’t careful and act in counterstory, we allow bad tradition to “reproduce itself.” So rather than kill the darlings, she looks to engage in conversation. “What do you think?” Learning about “whiteness” took time for her. Exposure. Ego is harmful and we must always revise. Very conversational, honest, somewhat frustrated/embarrassed. Ranges from personal background to some of the current research on the issues, including current events too. CRT essential to essay. College Writing Program director Wheaton College. Women. Subjected to misogyny.

Three Article Introductions

- Articles: “Refusing to Kill My Darlings” by Lisa Lebduska, “Five Pictures of my Sons” by Rita Malenczyk, and “On Becoming a Research Geek” by Paula Schumacher

Introduction Scrutinization: Part 1

- All three begin with a personal bit of backstory, with Schumacher and Lebduska telling very personal stories about themselves, whereas Malenczyk telling a story about her late son. As this is the genesis of their respective contexts, it makes sense. Two are telling a story very specific to them and their own evolution from their own experiences, whereas one is doing the same, but with a more focused attitude on a close but not internal conflict (even if it internally changed everything for Malenczyk). In terms of gesturing, Schumacher invokes a list of questions and quick rebuttals, almost in a Q&A move. Mostly it’s about background, and while not deeply personal to her own life, it is personal to her work story. Lebduska on the other hand was very personal, and it sets up some of her recognition of both a big problem, and her, while in a lesser sense, also being a part of that problem. This is essential to her story, being one of realization and recognition of the “other,” and the counterstory that goes with it. Lastly, Malenczyk offers a little context, which without the suicide warning in the title, could very easily be read as a positive memory of something good she will share as opposed to the incoming tragedy the reader experiences with her. It is very endearing and paints a strong picture of the subject of her essay in a positive light, which is essential to understand her story.

Three Article Introductions

- Articles: “Refusing to Kill My Darlings” by Lisa Lebduska, “Five Pictures of my Sons” by Rita Malenczyk, and “On Becoming a Research Geek” by Paula Schumacher

Introduction Scrutinization: Part 2

- In this manner, all three authors make a gesture towards the journals intention, which is to understand the “lived experiences of writers” (WCC). While that experience could be conceived as a positive one, these particular articles all express some various impediment that created unique challenges for them as people, and consequently, as writers. Be it a move that is deeply personal to our own experiences because the “thing” happened to us individually, or whether it is because something near and dear to us instead, all of these events deeply influence the writer, their cognition, and eventually, our awareness. Each writer, while experiencing some manner of frustration or tragedy learned to not ignore the pain, but to understand it as best they could that these kinds of problems are likely affecting other people and other writers, potential and already accomplished.

Informational Interview Report

Mary Gilmore

Course Design: Professional Identity

Professor: Deborah Mix

Course: ENG693



Mary Gilmore (she/her) is a fourth year PhD student in English Literature currently working on her dissertation in the field of nineteenth-century adaptation. She served as the chairperson for the 2022 Practical Criticism Midwest conference and has reviewed grants for the Ball State University Sponsored Projects Administration (SPA)

since 2022. She is currently the Graduate Assistant Director for the Creative Writing Program at Ball State as well as the Managing Editor of *Beautiful Things*, a weekly online micro-essay magazine published by Ball State University.

INTERVIEW 1: PUBLISHING

On November 29, 2021, I interviewed Jill Christman, a senior editor for *River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative* and executive producer of the podcast *Indelible: Campus Sexual Violence*. She teaches graduate and undergraduate classes in creative nonfiction writing and literary editing at Ball State University. We talked about her fortuitous path to editing a national nonfiction journal, her goals for the future, and her advice for students considering a career in publishing.

After experiencing a personal tragedy as a young adult, Jill has been driven to do what she loves from an early age, understanding that life is short. At first, she believed the myth that she couldn't make money as a writer. She makes sure to dispel this myth to her students, so they understand that the skill of writing is valuable in almost every discipline.

Most of her opportunities have been a result of the people she has met and worked with throughout her career. At one point, she worked in a cognitive psychology lab, and now, several years later, is collaborating on a book with her boss from that job. She never takes for granted the relationships she makes in the writing world and beyond.

"Follow the thing you love" isn't just a random saying for Jill. She believes that the more you love something, the more you will do it/practice it and the better you will become at it. This dedicated practice can turn into expertise and, with any luck, an actual paying job.

Jill has won many awards and published two memoirs, but her career took on a new meaning when she inherited the *River Teeth* nonfiction journal in 2019 when Joe Mackall and Dan Lehman, professors at Ashland University, retired. The nationally renowned journal, now housed at Ball State University, continues to thrive under her and Mark Neely's direction as senior editors. She looks at this opportunity as more than just a feather in her professional cap. She sees it as more of a legacy project and an important learning tool for students in a supportive hands-on environment. Jill is constantly paying forward those opportunities that were afforded to her and champions authors whose voices have traditionally been marginalized.

Jill's career path has not been a traditional one, but she trusted that if she continued to put herself in positions to do the things she loved, the rest would follow. As a current *River Teeth* intern, I'm happy to say that I will continue to learn from Jill next year when I take over as managing editor of *River Teeth's* online affiliate magazine, *Beautiful Things*.

INTERVIEW 2: GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

I met with Sarah Lee on December 2, 2021, to discuss her role as Senior Proposal Manager in The Office of Sponsored Projects Administration at Ball State University. Like Jill, Sarah was extremely generous with her time and shared a lot of career information with me. I asked her how one "breaks in" to the grant world since the majority of online job posts require ample experience in the area. She explained that her path started in a psychology research office, which she got after earning a degree in Psychology. She got experience there putting together major research proposals and so the job at SPA came naturally, yet somewhat unexpectedly because she didn't realize she had been acquiring so many transferrable skills in various positions she had

held over the years. She also said that people without experience can get knowledge and practice about the field by going through their certifying body (CRA) and earn a certification in research administration.

Although grants administration is a fairly structured job that adheres to federal, state, local, and university guidelines, she never finds it tedious because she gets to learn about new research ideas all the time and work with really passionate faculty members. This is what has kept her interested in the job for ten years. She is on the pre-award side, which means that she makes sure everything is in order before the grant is submitted. There is also a post-award team in her office that works with the details of the grants once they are awarded to make sure the funds are allocated and spent according to the grant guidelines.

We talked about what happens in the big picture campus-wide when someone applies for and/or wins a grant as well as some of the minutiae that goes into making a grant really viable. Things like a specific budget, including indirect costs, must be considered on the micro level as part of the many puzzle pieces that need to be seamless before the grant goes out for consideration.

It was really interesting to think about working in an alt-ac career that is still connected so closely to the university. At the end of our meeting, Sarah offered me the opportunity to be a student reviewer on her internal grants team next semester (spring 2022). This would entail reading and scoring grants (2-5 pages each) from both students and faculty members. After each grant is scored (on a scale from 1-5), a short rationale is added to the review. Another helpful hint she gave me for finding more opportunities in this area was to use the search terms for “Research Administrator” or “Contracts Administrator”. When I searched for these titles on both www.higheredjobs.com and www.usajobs.com, I came up with dozens of results (versus searching for “Grant Writer” – a search that yielded inconsistent results of freelance and part-time positions).

Both interviews yielded a wealth of knowledge, valuable contacts and opportunities/experience in the publishing and grants administration fields.

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Three Year Plan

	September	October	November	December
<i>Academic</i>	Submit Doctoral Committee Assignment Form	Fill Out Request Form and Register for DOC700 for SP22 \$75 fee – find link in Grad Handbook		Complete Pedagogy Portfolio Requirement for the Comp Exams
	Set up regular writing appointments in the Writing Center – attend grad writing retreat if offered	Get permission from Jill to intern again at River Teeth		Set up library carrel times for completing pedagogy project
<i>Professional</i>	Start Dissertation research grid in ENG 702			Complete Pedagogy Portion of Comp Exam over Winter Break
	Attend Adaptations in the Humanities Conference 9-10	Look at transferrable skills and resume writing doc in Grad Handbook under Doctoral Student Career Planning Guide	Start meeting with PCM team to start making decisions about the conference	Complete professional documents for employment search
	Attend Strategies and Resources for Funding your Scholarly Activity —Student Edition (Online) – 9-24-2021	Attend BSI Trust Lecture via Zoom Oct 2nd at 2pm	Attend Safe Zone Training on Thursday, November 4th, 5:30 - 9:30 PM (VIRTUAL).	

Three Year Plan (Continued)

2022	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>Academic</i>	Start DOC 700 and set up a regular study/ writing time at Writing Center or library.	Apply for 2022-2023 Graduate Assistantships	Apply for Rippy and Voss Scholarships (BSU)	Comp Exams April 11-17	Oral Exam May 6 from 10am-12pm	Start writing Dissertation Proposal		6 hours of DISS 799 to complete proposal	Connect with Michael Keen (Sherlock Holmes scholar) about adaptations	Submit DISS Prop		Start applying for jobs
	Check in with Dissertation Committee and Rachel about next steps			Review Dissertation Guide, Formatting Rules and Deadlines in Grad Handbook and Dissertation Resource Folder	Submit Admission to Candidacy and Approval of Dissertation Proposal Form online	Design research and writing schedule for dissertation	Interview Jennifer Blackmer re: Alias Grace stage adaptation					
	Complete Pedagogy Portion and Study Binder for Comps			Reconfirm committee availability for dissertation process – propose dates for completion								
<i>Professional</i>	Read submissions for PCM	Confirm venue and speakers at PCM	Finalize program for PCM PCM Conference March 17th		Transition into Managing Editor Position for <i>Beautiful Things</i>			Take over Managing Editor Position for <i>Beautiful Things</i>				

Three Year Plan (Continued)

	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<i>2023</i> <i>Academic</i>	6 Hours of DISS 799	Contact U of New Brunswick about research materials (I or Us)	Present at PCM Conference	Submit Chapters 1-2 to DISS committee	Start Summer RA position with Jill	3 hours of DISS 799 SU session	Submit Chapters 3-4 to DISS committee	3 hours of DISS 799 (last)?	Submit Doctoral Plan of Study to WQ203 (must be signed by JH)	Complete and Submit DISS		Graduate?
	Submit to PCM Conference											Defend DISS? Confirm with JH
<i>Professional</i>	Set up a professional online profile	Work on Novel	Coordinate In Print Book Festival with Jill		Renew or finish Managing Editor Position for Beautiful Things			Apply to alt-ac and U admin jobs			Interview for jobs	First Draft of Novel

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Transferrable Skills

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Meeting deadlines, handling confidential information, and planning events are just a few of the responsibilities required in a professional academic setting. None are possible without accountability, and that's one of the best attributes I offer to any organization. No matter the task, I consistently show up on time and prepared and feel an obligation to bring my best to any project or team of which I am a member.

PUBLIC SPEAKING:

As a teacher, of course, speaking to a group of people is a daily part of the job, but I have also spoken at professional events and conferences, chaired countless meetings, led advising sessions and registration orientation sessions (at University of Iowa), and I am currently organizing an academic conference in March 2022 at which I will host and introduce scholarly work. I am grateful to have had so much practice learning how to verbally communicate my ideas clearly and effectively as public speaking has become one of the activities I enjoy most.

EDITING:

Editing, one of the most useful (and accidentally acquired) skills in my toolbox, has evolved throughout my career into a practical competency in which I am now proficient. While I have been hired under the title of editor; curriculum editor, manuscript editor, and recently as managing editor of *Beautiful Things*, an online affiliate magazine of *River Teeth: A Journal of Nonfiction Narrative*, my editing skills have played a significant role in all the positions I have held. In my roles as an English teacher, Writing Center tutor, and research assistant, I came to truly understand the value of being able to edit other people's written work and provide constructive feedback.

This first set of transferrable skills was derived from Chapter 60 (p. 398) of Karen Kelsky's *The Professor is In*.

RESEARCH AND COURSEWORK:

- Quickly reading and processing large amounts of complex material, often while writing summary notes

- Framing: breaking down information, sequencing it, and creating an organizational framework for it (writing my dissertation)
- Concentration: Intense, sustained focus on a particular task or subject
- Fairness: Looking at an issue from multiple perspectives (serving on the ethics committee)
- Synthesizing: Finding connections among disparate ideas or viewpoints
- Weighing: Assessing evidence for its soundness and its relevance to a particular argument
- Navigating ethical considerations, as in securing institutional review board approval (passing comps and oral exams)
- Public speaking: Both as a specialist to an audience of specialists, and as a specialist to a general, multidisciplinary audience of educated listeners (led advising and registration orientation sessions at U of Iowa, hosted PCM, spoke at conferences, taught)
- Information gathering: Locating and navigating databases, archives, or other appropriate sources of information (taught ENG:104 Composing Research)
- Writing quickly and concisely
- Managing multiple deadlines and meeting them
- Editing others' written work (as a curriculum copyeditor, Writing Center tutor, River Teeth intern, teacher, graduate assistant for VSTOP, research assistant for faculty member)
- Revision of one's own writing: The task that, according to rhetoric scholar George Gopen, is one of the greatest intellectual experiences there is
- Critiquing peers' work, as in a writing group or workshop
- Storytelling: Creating a meaningful narrative by artfully selecting and arranging facts
- Ability to format Microsoft Word documents (it can be lucrative to do this for others)
- Facilitating communication among multiple stakeholders (for example, committee members)

TEACHING:

- Motivating groups and individuals to complete projects
- Facilitating group discussions
- Running purposeful, efficient meetings
- Preparing people for future learning by teaching foundational concepts and skills
- Public speaking as an expert who translates specialized knowledge to a general audience
- Course design, curriculum design

- Content development: Gathering and organizing facts into information on a given subject
- Identifying training objectives
- “Reading” an audience to determine their knowledge and interest level in the subject your discussing
- Coaching, tutoring, mentoring subordinates (for example, in office hours)
- Peer mentoring (helping fellow teachers)
- Managing mini-deadlines on the route to a major deadline
- Finding and nurturing others’ strengths
- Articulating overall goals for other people and creating a realistic schedule of mini-goals to structure the people’s pursuit of the goal
- Assessing others’ writing quickly and thoroughly

SERVICE:

- Navigating a bureaucracy (which forms need to be signed by whom, and sent where, and by what date)
- Collaborating with a team to produce something tangible (“deliverables”)

INTANGIBLES, EXTRACURRICULARS, AND MISCELLANEOUS:

- Finding humor in a dire situation
- Working under pressure
- Working without supervision

The following list of skills are from the [NACE Career Competencies](#) website.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Seek and embrace development opportunities.
- Voluntarily participate in further education, training, or other events to support one’s career.

COMMUNICATION:

- Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.

CRITICAL THINKING:

- Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION:

- Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.

LEADERSHIP:

- Plan, initiate, manage, complete, and evaluate projects.

PROFESSIONALISM:

- Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization.
- Maintain a positive personal brand in alignment with organization and personal career values.
- Be present and prepared.
- Demonstrate dependability (e.g., report consistently for work or meetings).
- Prioritize and complete tasks to accomplish organizational goals.
- Consistently meet or exceed goals and expectations.
- Have an attention to detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work.
- Show a high level of dedication toward doing a good job.
- Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.

TEAMWORK:

- Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions without interrupting.
- Effectively manage conflict, interact with, and respect diverse personalities, and meet ambiguity with resilience.
- Be accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables.
- Employ personal strengths, knowledge, and talents to complement those of others.
- Exercise the ability to compromise and be agile.
- Collaborate with others to achieve common goals.
- Build strong, positive working relationships with supervisor and team members/coworkers.

TECHNOLOGY:

- Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies.
- Use technology to improve efficiency and productivity of work.