

The CATE Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2010

Graduate Student Conference

By: Vance Martin

On April 9th the College of Education held its inaugural Graduate Student Conference. Sixty students from the six different education departments shared their current research with almost two-hundred attendees.

This conference grew out of the 2009 EOL Graduate Student Conference. Students and administrators felt that a college wide conference could be a success. When I was contacted in mid-December, the committee already had three active members. Over winter break I spent several mornings on Skype discussing what we wanted from a conference. Once school began we then met in person to continue planning the process. There were some early morning meetings and lots of emails.

The conference was difficult to plan because we really had no idea of many things: how many submissions we would get, how many people might attend, and what our budget might look like. So it was difficult to plan for how many rooms we would need, how many sessions we might have, or much help we might require. We were crunched for time on many things such as getting the proposal submission software up and running, coming up with a separate registration form, and figuring out who would review the submissions.

Once the submissions were done and the reviewing was completed, we had an idea of how many students would be presenting, Once we were able to begin scheduling, we then had to worry about how to setup rooms, who would we need to help in each room, and how would the day actually turn out. Once registration had ended, we had submitted the food orders, and figured out the logistics, we felt somewhat relieved. There was still packet packing, setup, and the unplanned little things, but overall we had students presenting, people coming, and food for them all.

The conference day was amazing. Everything seemed to fall in place, and people seemed to be enjoying themselves and sharing their research. I have heard nothing but good reviews of the day, and the conference committee was thrilled with the whole event. I'd like to thank everyone who helped make this conference a success. Now that it is over, we still have a few meetings left to assess the event and think about where we want to go from here.

In the next few weeks we'll be sending out an email to have graduate students come to discuss where we go from here. Some of the committee members will stay, but some of us who will hopefully be graduating will not. We have laid the groundwork to show that a student led conference can be a success. Next year's conference will take work, but you will have a framework and know what is already possible. What should next years conference look like? How big should it be? How early should we start? CI will need a new committee member. . . it could be you.

We'd like to extend a special thanks to Vance Martin for his contribution of this piece. Vance is a third year doctoral student in CATE. If you are interested in contributing to next year's conference, please contact Vance at vmart02s@illinois.edu.

The University of
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Note from the Editors:

Students in the CATE department accomplished a lot this semester. We want to take the time to review these accomplishments and spotlight individual work. Celebrating others' accomplishments helps us to see the possibilities in our selves. We'd love to highlight your Accomplishments or feature your work in our Fall newsletter! Please email us your contributions. Next Fall, we will return to our examinations of research specializations.

Have a good summer!
-Ritu Radhakrishnan and
Hilarie Welsh

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Perspective from a First-time Conference Presenter

By: Hilarie Welsh

I spent the first year of graduate school supporting my peers and hearing about their experiences as conference presenters. I looked forward to my first opportunity to present at a conference. I finally got the opportunity this year, my second year of grad school. My first experience was a paper presentation in Chicago at the Annual Association of Teacher Educators Conference (ATE) where a group of us from the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (<http://intc.education.illinois.edu>) presented. I couldn't believe that after all of our preparation, we only had three audience members! Talk about easing my way into being a conference presenter!

My second conference presentation was an individual effort. Since it was a smaller conference (a regional ATE conference), I wasn't as nervous as I had been for the Chicago presentation. I was not, however, expecting a room jam-packed with audience members! The audience was supportive, and it turned out to be a positive experience. I really enjoyed the ATE conferences and plan to become more active in the organization. The members are welcoming, supportive, and friendly. I recently checked the ATE website (ate1.org) because I'd like to present a paper I'm working on at the annual conference next year. I was thrilled when I discovered a new support they put in place for graduate students and recent graduates (see p. 3 for more information). So, if you'd like the opportunity to present at a conference and would appreciate extra support in an already friendly environment, I encourage you to check out ATE.

I almost forgot to mention that the conference is held in Orlando next year...in February.

Preparing for General and Special Field Exams: A Collaborative Process

By: Jeanne Kohler

Preparing for your general and/or special field exams creates anxiety. I recently passed both exams, but the experience and emotions are still fresh. With this experience behind me, I can share what I learned through the process. The centerpiece to creating well-developed responses to the general and special field exams is having solid questions that connect to the work you have been doing. Creating solid questions requires a *collaborative* process. It requires you to actively reach out to other graduate students, professors, and most importantly, your advisor long before you are ready for the exam.

Peer Interaction. Other graduate students feel the same exam anxiety you do. Many have developed approaches to studying and preparing, and these approaches may include developing tables, using reference software, writing on index cards, or drawing concept maps. By sharing techniques with one another, you have the opportunity to develop your own style. Find graduate students who have passed the exams and talk to them about their exam questions and experiences. Create your own mini-research study that answers the question: How do students successfully prepare and complete the general and special field exams? As you collaborate with others, you will build lasting friendships that alleviate anxiety and create a circle of support.

Professor and Advisor Involvement. When I was a K-12 teacher, I valued students who were actively engaged in learning. I believe the vast majority of professors would echo this value for graduate student engagement. Identify professors that connect with you and have expressed an interest in your research. Professors who offer insight and guidance along your academic journey may serve as ideal readers for your exams. Along the way, be sure to:

- Create a one-page summary of your general field interests as well as your special field interests.
- Set up a meeting time with your advisor to discuss your interests as well as a list of potential readers.
- Ask identified professors to be readers, and if they accept, set up a time to meet and discuss your research interests with them.
- Be open to input and guidance.

In the end, your advisor and readers draft the final question. If you take an active role in collaborating with them, they are able to create a question that speaks to your areas of interest. My process was more haphazard than what I describe; however, my advisor, professors, and graduate students were instrumental in helping me find my way.

A successful, young author, Mattie Stepanek (1990-2004) provides us with sound advice, "Unity is strength...when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."

Jeanne Kohler is a 3rd year doctoral student in CATE. She recently defended her Prelim and is working on her dissertation.

Information & Opportunities

Concepts of Globalization for Teacher Preparation

The seminar series on Global Contexts in Education is a part of the Re-envisioning the Preparation of Teachers initiative. Re-envisioning the Preparation of Teachers is led by a group of College of Education faculty members who are responsible for defining and designing a new vision for teacher education in the College of Education. This group of educators aim to develop recommendations for a substantive and creative redesign that makes the preparation of teachers a college-wide responsibility. This responsibility involves all faculty working in partnership with teachers and administrators from community schools. This new design requires a change in perspectives on teacher education. Teacher preparation is not simply the responsibility of a few select departments, but the responsibility of the entire College. While the redesigned program will benefit from the expertise of all faculty in the college, we will also realize enhanced efficiencies in times of fiscal concern. The design team is being facilitated by Dr. Chris Span (Dean's Fellow), Dr. Stafford Hood (Department Head, Curriculum and Instruction) and Dr. Chris Roegge (Director, Council on Teacher Education). Professors Sue Noffke (Curriculum & Instruction) and Lisa Monda-Amaya (Special Education) have agreed to co-chair the design team. (For more information on the Re-envisioning the Preparation of Teachers Initiative, <http://education.illinois.edu/transitions/reenvisioning-teacher-preparation.html>)

Jeesuk Kim is a third-year doctoral student in CATE. We asked her to share her thoughts on the seminar series on Global Contexts in Education. For more information, please email Jeesuk at kim263@illinois.edu.

I have been involved in a seminar series of re-envisioning teacher education (RTE), called "Concepts of Globalization for Teacher Preparation," initiated by Dr. Susan Noffke in this semester. The previous focus of the RTE seminar, which began a couple of years ago, was to examine "*who we are*" as an institution in general for teacher education in the College of Education. This year, we have concentrated on "global context" while trying to think about "*who are we, what do we value and what do we want to be known as within the global context of teacher education.*" One of the reasons that we invoked those questions is because we often hear very different voices in the literature that advocates internationalizing teacher education: a heavy focus on the global market, a very small but clear focus on global justice, a focus on environmental issues and a highlight on global village. Under the umbrella of diverse concepts, including cosmopolitanism, subaltern perspectives, global justice, and sustainable development, 15-25 people have been discussing the issues of internationalizing teacher education in a monthly seminar.

As a research assistant, I have been participating in organizing this seminar, and developing the RTE webpage (<http://gather.ed.uiuc.edu/>) for this seminar with Dr. Noffke and our colleague, Deborah Gilman (doctoral student, C&I). Personally, this seminar has been a great opportunity to understand diverse concepts and perspectives on internationalizing teacher education. Also, it has been a great chance to hear diverse opinions from a wide range of participants from emeritus professors, professors, clinical professors, adjunct lecturers, the executive director, to the graduate students in the college of education.

Annual Association of Teacher Educators- Emerging Scholars Series

Emerging Scholars Series: Graduate students and those who have graduated within the last two years are encouraged to apply to participate in the new Association of Teacher Educators' Emerging Scholars Series. This is a prestigious, highly competitive strand highlighting the work of scholars who are new to academia.

The purpose of the series is to foster a community of emerging scholars within ATE and to create a support network for recent graduates and soon to be graduates. While we strongly encourage research presentations, we will also consider other types of presentations such as conceptual analyses and program descriptions. Participants' presentations will be grouped by topic and assigned an ATE Facilitator to coordinate and mentor during the session. Participants will also attend a reception that will allow them to engage with more experienced scholars in conversation around issues such as navigating the job market, thriving in the first two years, preparing articles for publication, or balancing teaching, research, and service. ([http://www.ate1.org/pubs/Call for Proposals 1.cfm](http://www.ate1.org/pubs/Call_for_Proposals_1.cfm))

Upcoming Conference Dates in C-U

International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry– May 26-29, 2010 (<http://www.icqi.org/>)

Focus on Illinois Education Research Symposium– June 9-10, 2010 (http://ierc.siue.edu/documents/Registration_Materials_2009.pdf)

Beginning Teacher Conference-Y2: Moving Beyond Survival-June 29, 2010 (<http://intc.education.illinois.edu/page/intc-beginning-teacher-conference>)

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Education

Summer in C-U!!!

June 11th-13th: Taste of Champaign-Urbana
(<http://www.champaignparkdistrict.com/events/taste/index.html>)

July 9th & 10th: Champaign Music Festival (<http://champaign150.com/>)

August 14th & 15th: Champaign Urbana Days

August 21st: Downtown Festival of the Arts
(<http://www.champaignparkdistrict.com/events/dtfoa/index.html>)

Check out Champaign Park Districts Neighborhood Concert Series, Hessel Park Concerts, and Eat to the Beat at www.champaignparkdistrict.com/

We Want to Hear From You!
Do you have suggestions for the next CATE newsletter? Would you like to submit an article for publication? What events would you like to see planned for CATE students? A social? Brownbag seminars? Send us your suggestions!

E-mail us with your comments and suggestions!
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Student Spotlight-Deb Gilman

Mommy, Please Help Me Understand

Mommy, can you tell me?
Please help me understand,
Why do people do the mean things they do
When they could walk hand-in-hand?

I ran and caught the ball today
Trudy grabbed the ball from me,
She yelled, "Cracker!" and, "Go away!"
I yelled right back --- I was really angry.

Dear One, there are hate words in many languages
That hurt and break and tear ---
You need to be more loving
And choose words that come from care.

My classmate, Brent, came running up ---
He gave me back the ball.
He hugged Trudy, saying, "She's OK."
He motioned me to throw the ball to Paul.

I thought that I was one of them,
Although my skin is light---
Their skin is like sweet chocolate
Why did she want to fight?

Dear One, there are many different skin colors---
Eyes of brown, green and blue---
Different heights and weights of bodies
And hair of many colors, too.

But sometimes when people look unusual, or
When they are not the same,
Some people find small things to hate
They find big ways to blame.

Mommy, can you tell me?
Please help me understand,
Why do people do the mean things they do
When they could walk hand-in-hand?

Why does that woman have a scarf-wrapped head?
I saw her when we were in the store ---
You couldn't see her hair or face
Just her eyes and nothing more.

Another woman wore a dress there
Purple, green and trimmed with gold---
It wrapped her like a birthday gift---
On her forehead a red dot bright and bold.

Dear One, there are many ways of wearing clothes ---
Silk, cotton, wool, and leather ---
What suits one here may not suit others there
So much depends upon the weather.

Sometimes we dress in the fashions of the day ---
What we choose to wear might seem strange to others.
But sometimes we dress by the customs and traditions

We are often shown by our mothers.

Mommy, can you tell me?
Please help me understand,
Why do people do the mean things they do
When they could walk hand-in-hand?

Mommy, some kids at school were making fun
Of those who don't speak our language.

They say they are stupid and they can't write ---
They can't even read one page.

There are differences in our languages,
Our cultures and beliefs,
That's what makes life interesting ---
The joys, the wonders and the grief.

Dear One, there are people
Who practice fear and hate
You have to look beyond them
And choose a better fate.

Think before you say things ---
Words can never be taken back.
Look for the good in others
Forgive them for manners they lack.

Dear One, I have raised you to be gentle ---
To practice ways of being kind.
Now run out and play with all of your friends ---
All the friends that you might find.