

**Dual Global Pandemics:
Teacher Perspectives and Tools**

This spring our planet witnessed the rapid escalation of what has since been dubbed “The Twin Pandemics,” referring to the surge of COVID-19 and the scourge of racial injustice and inequality. As both situations reach a tipping point, we have been collectively called to respond with proactive persistence to protect ourselves and others by slowing the spread of coronavirus, and to intensify our efforts to ensure safety and equality for minorities around the world.

Reflecting those themes, this issue of *Field Notes* begins with our annual analysis article written by Holly Shinn. Holly teaches at Glendover Elementary, a school that employs an international focus, and she has mentored several of our student teachers who completed a portion of their field experiences overseas. Her piece highlights the importance of flexibility and cultural responsiveness as traits of an effective teacher.

Next we highlight innovative books produced by two team members of the UK College of Education Office of Clinical Preparation and Partnerships. Research Academic Coordinator Mariama Lockington discusses her recently published work of fiction, “For Black Girls Like Me,” which has been received with great enthusiasm and appreciation by readers young and old as a treasured contribution to a vastly underrepresented genre. Also featured is a write-up of the “Handbook of Research on STEM Education,” an innovative work co-edited by Associate Dean Margaret Mohr-Schroeder. This handbook emphasizes not only the value of collaboration and integration of the multiple fields within STEM, but also the importance of facilitating success among racial and ethnic minorities in STEM.

Finally, we recognize new faculty working with our teacher candidates, recent recipients of promotion and tenure, award-winning alumni, and recent retirees.

We would love to hear stories of how you are addressing the global pandemics, or to learn about any helpful resources you have found for enhancing remote teaching, learning, and supervision.

With earnest dedication to promoting health and equality,

Sharon Brennan & Mary Henderson
Co-editors, *Field Notes*

Shaping the Next Generation

Holly Shinn, Kindergarten Teacher
Glendover Elementary, Fayette County

I recently came across an old yearbook from one of my first years of teaching. The kindergarteners in that photo were part of the high school graduating class of 2020. Their graduation was not what they expected, but they did graduate! They are off to college, jobs, and new experiences. Looking at the photos, I remember them as those sweet and timid 5-year-olds coming to “big kid” school for the first time. I now see adults with limitless possibilities to affect the future. It’s hard to think that teaching the alphabet was the first step to becoming a famous author; or performing a simple science experiment sparked the interest in a child wanting to be a doctor. Thinking of the possibilities reminds me of the Henry Adams quote, “A teacher affects eternity: he [sic] can never tell where his influence stops.”

I have had the pleasure of hosting student teachers in my classroom for the past 5 years. I started hosting them in the Spring of 2015. Those student teachers are now in their own classrooms. I hope that the experiences they had in my classroom were positive and had an impression on their teaching as well. It is especially motivating for me when I pause and think of all the lives that have been exponentially impacted through my teaching and my work with young preservice student teachers. Teaching really does affect eternity in ways we can’t even imagine.

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Read inside about two innovative books by UK College of Education employees from the Office of Clinical Preparation and Partnerships: Research Administrative Coordinator Mariama Lockington and Associate Dean Margaret Mohr-Schroeder.

Every year students take the opportunity to evaluate the Teacher Education Program (TEP) at the University of Kentucky. Recently I reviewed the student teacher program evaluations for the 2019-2020 school year. The majority of preservice teachers reported that being in the classroom and experiencing daily events was especially helpful in preparing them for their careers. The quantitative survey score for the overall value of the student teaching experience was 3.69 out of 4.0. Many remarked that their time in the classroom (along with the guidance of a supervising teacher) was the most beneficial. This sentiment is expressed in such comments as:

“Having the opportunity to teach every day and work with so many different types of children was amazing. I loved having the opportunity to take charge and lead the classroom. It was a wonderful experience.”

“Nothing prepares you more for becoming a teacher than actually doing it, in the classroom all day, every day.”

“All the hands-on things we did behind the scenes--creating our OWN unit and data set, records and notes, and both daily and long-range plans.”

Many student teachers experience two different placements during their student teaching semester. During those two placements they work to complete a variety of assignments and lessons that culminate in a week of independent teaching. Many commented that having two different experiences was beneficial, however a few wished for placements that were not so similar. During their solo week, the student teachers take over all classroom responsibilities. This experience was frequently mentioned as one of the most helpful and eye-opening experiences to the teaching profession.

“Solo week helped me gain confidence with leading the entire class through lessons and transitions.”

“The two solo weeks were the most beneficial aspects of student teaching. Through these experiences I had the opportunity to plan, implement, and reflect on my classroom management and instructional strategies. While exhausting, they were both very rewarding.”

“Solo week was eye opening for me and showed me what running my own classroom would be like. Student teaching was very enjoyable and helped me prepare for leading my own classroom one day.”

In addition to being in the classroom daily, student teachers participate in a variety of seminars. These

PD Opportunity for Student Teacher Supervisors

This training session fulfills Part B of the co-teaching training requirement outlined in regulation 16 KAR 5:040, which is required for first-time cooperating teachers. Three hours of PD credit is offered to attendees.



Wednesday, September 16, 2020

4:30-7:30 p.m., online via Zoom

To register, contact: martin.mills@uky.edu

include seminars on using technology in the classroom, interviewing for a job, etc. The goal of these seminars is to provide them with information they might not experience in the classroom and to promote professional growth. The average rating for the seminars was 3.48 out of 4. The comments below provide insights into the perceived value of the seminars:

“The seminars chosen for the student teachers this semester were very beneficial for me in preparing me for my professional role. I hadn’t previously thought about some of the things--like culturally responsive teaching and trauma informed care--as much as I should have, but now I will be more aware. I also loved the principal panel and the first-year teacher panel because I felt like they were preparing us for what was to come.”

“The seminars really helped me see the reality of teaching. Talking to first year teachers and veteran teachers really helps. The supervising groups we were put into helped me, too. They were a support system throughout the whole experience.”

“Seminars helped tremendously. Each one was centered around something we wouldn’t necessarily learn inside the classroom. Specifically, the interviewing seminar helped prepare me for future interviews.”

“I enjoyed all the seminars during my teacher preparation program. They prepared me for things that are not always discussed with the CT in the classroom.”

Some student teachers choose to go abroad for part of their student teaching experience. I personally chose this option and completed my student teaching in Australia in 2004. It was an amazing experience that will always be with me. I have had student teachers leave me to teach in Australia, Spain, Sweden, and more. Many have declared this as a life changing experience. The program continues to grow at UK and provide valuable experiences, as evidenced in student comments:

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Field Notes is published twice a year by UK’s Office of Clinical Preparation and School Partnerships.

“My time in Australia and the US allowed me to see two types of education systems. When I was in Australia, I worked with students who others had given up on. It was an amazing experience to work with these students. I had to work harder to show them I wasn’t going to give up on them like others had in the past. This experience reminded me why I want to be an educator.”

“Student teaching abroad was the single most defining experience of my university career. I learned greater independence, flexibility, and cultural competency, all of which will be invaluable assets as I enter the professional field. I also found it incredibly beneficial to work in a school which lacked sufficient special education support and staffing, because I learned how to create my own programs and supports from scratch, and how to train other school staff to implement behavior management according to my plans.”

The end of 2020 was like nothing anyone expected. In a short amount of time, everything was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many students were left uncertain about next steps. Student teachers abroad were brought home, and everyone transitioned to online learning. It was a challenge for everyone! Student teachers were disappointed about missed placements, but they did learn a valuable lesson about the importance of flexibility as a teaching skill, illustrated in the quotes below:

“Because of COVID-19, I feel that I missed out on a lot of experiences you can only gain from working with students in person. This is nobody’s fault, but I wish I had more time in the schools. As I left my first placement, I was finally feeling comfortable being in the classroom every day. I was very sad to have to leave after only one week in my second placement.”

“This semester was unlike any other for student teachers in that we taught during COVID-19. Learning how to prepare for NTI and to teach remotely was invaluable.”

“Teaching remotely showed me that you have to be prepared for unknown circumstances and taught me ways to adapt lessons into a virtual model when I cannot physically be there with each student.”

The pandemic was the most mentioned negative part of the semester. Other challenges included the OTIS system, specific courses, and insufficient exposure to the required details associated with teaching, such as paperwork, teaching ELL students, IEPs, ARCs, referrals, etc. There were also a few comments concerning challenges with individual personalities and unique circumstances.

Reading and analyzing this year’s student evaluations reinforced my positive attitude and experiences associated with the University of Kentucky’s Teacher Education Program. The majority of comments were positive and reflect an overall excitement about the profession and their future careers. I am happy I get to participate in the development of these young preservice teachers. I know they will go on to positively influence our next generation!

Writing the Book That Hadn’t Been Written

Beth Goins, Director of Marketing



Growing up as a Transracial adoptee in a multiracial household, **Mariama J. Lockington** scoured library shelves for books with covers that featured someone like her. Yet few of the protagonists were someone with whom she could identify, and none seemed to reflect her experience growing up as the Black daughter of white parents.

This experience led to a 10-year labor of love and creativity by Lockington, who holds master’s degrees in creative writing and education and is the research administrative coordinator in the University of Kentucky College of Education’s Office of Clinical Preparation and Partnerships.

“**For Black Girls Like Me**” was published in 2019, to critical acclaim and has rocketed into the public eye again in 2020 as readers — young and adult alike — seek out creative works by Black authors.

Yet, Lockington says, while the book is targeted at young readers ages 8-14, it’s a novel to which many can relate. At its heart, “For Black Girls Like Me” is a universal story about growing up and figuring out where one belongs.

UKNow talked to Lockington about her book, its impact, her perspectives on young adult literature and what’s next in her career as an author and educator.

Following are highlights from the interview originally published at <https://www.uknow.uky.edu>, condensed for this publication due to space constraints:

I’ve always been a storyteller, and I come from a family of artists. I started to really identify as a writer in high school when I had the privilege of attending Interlochen, an arts boarding school. I attended as a creative writing major, and that is where I really started to work on my craft and set goals of one day being a published author. I went on to study African American studies and literature in college, and then I eventually earned my MFA in poetry.

“For Black Girls Like Me” is not a memoir, but it is a **#OwnVoices** novel based on some of my own experiences. It deals with some heavy topics -- racism, microaggressions, and mental health -- but it is also about friendship, finding a voice, and having hope. I’ve found that sometimes adult readers are unsure whether young people can handle all of this, but when I’ve had the chance to speak with young readers they’ve given me feedback proving otherwise.

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Welcome to New Faculty

The UK College of Education recently hired 12 new faculty members! We are highlighting two who will be working with our teacher candidates:

Professor **Cheryl Matias, Ph.D.**, has won awards and recognition for her research focusing on race and ethnic studies in education with a “feminist of color” approach. She is also interested in supporting motherscholars and women of color in academia.

Assistant Professor **Sahar Alameh, Ph.D.**, specializes in effective pedagogies in science learning and teaching, including meaningful assessment of student understanding and explanation of scientific phenomena.

We welcome all new faculty to the college!

Congratulations to Promotion & Tenure Recipients

We wish hearty congratulations to STEM Education faculty member **Lisa Amick** and Secondary Social Studies faculty member **Ryan Crowley**. Dr. Amick has been promoted to Clinical Associate Professor, and Dr. Crowley is now an Associate Professor with tenure. We thank them for their hard work and contributions to our teacher education program while serving as Program Faculty Chairs for their respective programs.

Kudos to Award Winners

Congratulations to UK College of Education alumni who garnered special recognition during the past year:

Amber Ethington

CKEC Outstanding Special Educator, Fayette County

Amber teaches students with moderate/severe disabilities at Garrett Morgan Elementary. She earned her B.S. and a Master’s degree in Special Education Teacher Leadership with an Autism Certificate at UK. She is now working toward certification as a board-certified behavior analyst.

Christopher McCurry

Valvoline Teacher Achievement Award (TAA)

Christopher teaches English at Lafayette High School in Fayette County. He earned his B.A. and a Master’s degree from UK, and he is now working toward a Specialist degree in Educational Leadership. As a TAA winner, Christopher will compete with 23 others for the 2021 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Award.

Farewell to Recent Retirees

We would like to recognize recent College of Education retirees who made invaluable contributions to our teacher education program, and to the lives of our graduates, throughout their careers: Lecturer **Jeanette Groth**, Professor **Joan Mazur**, and Professor **Lucian Taylor, Jr.** We will miss them dearly!

Many times when I talk to a young reader about my book, they tell me it’s the first book they’ve read that deals with “real issues Black kids have to face” or that they are re-reading it because they felt so seen. We need to trust that young people can handle the good and the bad of being human.

I want young readers to know that it’s OK to feel more than one thing at once. My main character both feels love for her adoptive family, but also feels deep grief related to the trauma of having lost her connection to her biological family. She both loves her black skin, and also hates how her skin color makes people treat her differently than her parents and sister. Growing up, life is full of joy and pain. It’s OK to not be OK, and it’s OK to speak up and ask for help and support. My book is, more than anything, about a young person searching for her voice and sense of belonging.

The [WeNeedDiverseBooks.org](http://www.WeNeedDiverseBooks.org) movement was started to address a lack of representation in children’s literature, and it is a movement that I am honored to be a part of. Data collected by Children’s Cooperative Book Council shows that the majority of stories being published for young people feature white or animal protagonists. To provide a deeper reading experience and open conversations about topics like those in my book, take an inventory of the books you currently have. How many feature BIPOC, diversely abled, or LGBTQIA+ characters? Are there more contemporary titles you can pair with them or replace them with entirely? Then ask the young people in your life what kinds of books they want to read or see more of.

As adults, if your own bookshelf is homogeneous, how can you expect to have rich, productive, and honest conversations with young people about race, sexuality, gender, diverse abilities, etc.? Adults need to engage with more diverse stories in order to model an environment that is truly safe for youth to have these book-driven conversations and experiences in.

I feel a deep frustration that so many had to literally die in order for the world to wake up and realize that Black lives and Black stories matter. I hope that white people continue to support Black creators long after the initial shock of this moment dies down, and that the publishing industry takes a long, hard look at the financial and marketing resources they put behind Black authors versus non-Black authors.

I have another middle grade novel called “In the Key of Us” coming out in 2022. I also have a short story coming out in 2021 in an anthology for young people called, “This is Our Rainbow: 16 Stories of Her, Him, Them and Us.” I plan to keep writing stories for young people, and I also hope to publish a poetry collection one day soon.

Twitter: [@marilock](https://twitter.com/marilock) Instagram: [@forblackgirlslikeme](https://www.instagram.com/forblackgirlslikeme)
Website: <http://www.forblackgirlslikeme.com>

Associate Dean Seeks to Break Through Barriers with First Handbook of STEM Education Research

Beth Goins, Director of Marketing

For more than a decade, University of Kentucky College of Education Professor and Associate Dean **Margaret Mohr-Schroeder** has worked to remove barriers in order to facilitate authentic, hands-on educational opportunities for students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, collectively known as STEM.

She brings this integrated, community-engaged and equity-focused perspective to “The Handbook of Research on STEM Education,” a groundbreaking book she co-edited with three other well-respected STEM researchers.

“From the beginning of my work, I and the other editors of the book have long argued for an integrated approach to STEM,” Mohr-Schroeder said.

Rather than focusing on each STEM subject in isolation, the book analyzes research and policy within the realm of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education as a whole.

“In integrated STEM, you concentrate on curriculum, research, professional development opportunities, and activities, for example, that integrate two or more areas of STEM,” Mohr-Schroeder said. “That’s not to say that each one in isolation is not important, but integrated STEM approaches are most like what students will see within a STEM career or even in a non-STEM career. We’re often trained to take classes or study subjects in ‘silos.’ This makes it more difficult to contextualize where and how this might apply later in life – the infamous question, ‘When am I ever going to use this?’”

In STEM settings such as innovative summer camps or family STEM nights, students can immediately practice what they learn, by building robots that perform specific functions, for example, or creating a virtual reality short film, or extracting DNA from a strawberry and analyzing it. Learning experiences such as these have helped build bridges between higher education and K-12 schools by bringing public school students and teachers to college campuses, and college faculty, undergraduates and graduate students to public schools. At the same time, she has worked to build collaborations across the university, reaching across disciplines to work with professors with expertise in STEM subjects.

“STEM is not a replacement for deep content knowledge in a particular area. It’s not about surface knowledge in each of the areas, but rather gaining deeper knowledge in one or more areas so that you can then collaborate

with others to solve complex problems,” Mohr-Schroeder said.

STEM integration not only involves a more inclusive view of STEM subjects, but also access to high-quality STEM learning experiences for each and every student, especially underrepresented populations such as females and Black, Indigenous and People of Color.

“Through those STEM learning experiences, we work to disrupt systems of oppression and privilege,” Mohr-Schroeder said. “The goal is to increase students’ access to and knowledge of STEM literacy, helping them grow and become societal change agents.”

UK Associate Professor **Cindy Jong** also leads a critical chapter in the Handbook, “Race-related Factors in STEM: A Review of Research on Educational Experiences and Outcomes for Racial and Ethnic Minorities.”

Jong and co-authors use critical race theory as an analytical lens for their review. “Critical race theory is a timely framework to understand history and address the current climate, as it centralizes marginalized voices and emphasizes intersectionality among its multiple principles that unpack how racism operates in education and society,” Jong said. Intersectionality refers to the interconnectedness of race, class, gender and other individual characteristics, and overlapping systems of discrimination that compound experiences.

The chapter highlights factors that promote success among racial and ethnic minorities and encourage an asset perspective, which is a focus on strengths and solutions. When examining why there are so few minorities in STEM, it is common for researchers to ask questions that place blame rather than seeking solutions by exploring how environments cultivate meaningful experiences for students, Jong noted.

“We only scratched the surface of this topic due to word limitations, but I think this chapter provides a launching point and illuminates the research and policies needed to combat racist practices that have discouraged Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from participating in STEM for far too long,” Jong said.

The book includes a total of 37 chapters that dive deeply into the implementation of STEM since it was established as a field 20 years ago. The editors hope that it will help to support and guide future research into effective integrated STEM practice.

Article originally published at <https://uknow.uky.edu/>



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SPOTLIGHT ON COLLABORATION: SCHOOL PARTNERS
College of Education alum Emily Tighe, Digital Learning Coach at Lafayette High School, shared tips and insights for graduating teacher candidates on adopting technology into teaching and learning as they prepare to lead their own classrooms.

Collaborative Connection: Sharing Ideas

We want to feature your ideas about teaching and learning and stories about collaborative projects taking place between and among university and school-based partners.

- How do you foster student learning and promote quality teaching, whether face-to-face or remote?
- What challenges have you faced, and what changes did you make to overcome them?
- What collaborative projects have you observed or implemented?
- How are you addressing equity in your school, classroom, or community?

Send stories or ideas to:
mary.henderson@uky.edu

Mark Your Calendar

August 14 9:00 am	University Supervisors' meeting -- via Zoom
August 17	First day for most STs
August 17 1:00 pm	ST Orientation -- via Zoom
September 16 4:00-7:00 pm	Cooperating Teacher / University Supervisor Training-- via Zoom
October 5	Middle School STs begin placements
October 12	Dual placement STs begin 2nd placements
December 4	Last day of finals week

Tuition Waiver Program for Cooperating Teachers

Some state universities provide cooperating teachers a tuition waiver for 3-6 credits depending on duration of student teaching supervision.

To redeem your waiver at UK, you must:

- use your credits within one calendar year of completing the assignment,
- gain admission to the university and be a student in good standing,
- complete a tuition waiver form prior to each semester enrolled,
- submit the waiver form to the associate dean's office prior to the first day of classes for each semester of enrollment,
- visit <https://education.uky.edu/ADeanARGS/tuitionwaiver> for contact info and an application to redeem your waiver at UK.

To claim your tuition waiver at other Kentucky universities, visit:
<http://www.epsb.ky.gov/mod/page/view.php?id=142>