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**DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE**

of

Lauren A. Vogel

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Curriculum and Instruction

**ARE WE UNCOMFORTABLE YET?  
EXAMINING CRITICAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES FOR  
AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF KNOWING  
THE NEED FOR A NEW WAY OF THINKING  
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE  
A PRACTITIONER'S RESEARCH STORY**

Friday, May 5, 2023

11:00 a.m.

403 White Hall

Kent State University

## **Lauren A. Vogel**

M.A. English  
(TESL concentration)  
Kent State University, 2005

B.A. German  
Kent State University, 2002

Lauren has been a university lecturer in the English Department at Kent State for nearly twenty years. She has taught English abroad in Istanbul, Turkey as well as German as a foreign language for a local corporation. Currently, she teaches English as a Second Language (ESL), English Composition, Second Language Acquisition, Children's Literature, and Honor's Colloquium.

Lauren's curricular focus uses Bishop's (1990) concept of windows, mirrors, and sliding glass door to introduce and discuss issues of social justice. Additionally, her current pedagogical interest focuses on using adult crossover picturebooks to promote literacy skills, generate inquiry, and foster empathy. She has published on how she uses crossover picturebooks in her adult ESL classroom to promote literacy skills, stimulate student agency and autonomy and to help students become aware of differing perspectives. She has also presented on the success she has had using crossover picturebooks in her domestic classroom to promote empathy and stimulate research inquiry. Additionally, she has published on topics of adult reading literacy and reading fluency. Furthermore, she has presented on the topic of hegemony and the need for teachers' to expand their ways of knowing beyond the current cannon of thought. She will be conducting a workshop in Kigali, Rwanda at the Peace Education in an Era of Crisis Conference where she will use an adult crossover picturebook to guide participants in an activity to tie critical thought and critical literacy development into an introspective reflection about understanding ourselves through the eyes of others. She is the winner of Equity, Inclusion, & Success Award from Kent State University & a

nominee Of The Month Award for the National Residence Hall Honorary organization.

## **ARE WE UNCOMFORTABLE YET? EXAMINING CRITICAL CLASSROOM PRACTICES FOR AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF KNOWING THE NEED FOR A NEW WAY OF THINKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE A PRACTITIONER'S RESEARCH STORY**

The purpose of this qualitative self-study was to investigate my own critical teaching practices in a Freshman university classroom and to see what happened to my teacher identity when my curriculum and instruction focused on issues of social justice. I used a Values Coding system to see what values, beliefs, and attitudes would emerge. I collected fieldnotes, created concept maps, composed vignettes, and engaged with critical friends for data collection. I composed found poetry, created emotional arcs, composed vignettes, and engaged with critical friends for data analysis.

I used Kincheloe & Steinberg's (1993, 1997, 2017) postformalism as my theoretical framework. A postformal curriculum and instruction involves problem detection, uncovering hidden assumptions, noticing relationships and patterns, connecting logic and emotion, and attending to particularities.

Findings revealed that I was largely unaware of the particularities of Generation Z. Not knowing and understanding the values of Gen Z resulted in moments of discomfort and pushback. Results also showed I value comfort and safety and I would make curricular adjustments so that comfort and safety would be a priority in my classroom. Furthermore, analysis revealed feelings are a valued way of knowing and resilience would be vital attitude to push me through uncomfortable and challenging moments. Working with Gen Z revealed the complexities of my teacher identity.

Curricular implications suggest it is important to be aware of our complicity in maintaining the hegemonized, status-quo if we are to strive for fairness in our classrooms. Teachers should attend to students' particularities otherwise both groups

run the risk of becoming angry, alienated, and sullen.