

APA DIVISION 15 PRESENTS

Newsletter for Educational Psychologists

Spring 2020 Edition

In This Issue

- 2 Message from President Helenrose Fives
- 5 Executive Committee Fall Retreat Minutes
- 6 Education Practice Briefs
- 7 Defending your Dissertation... Virtually...
During a Pandemic
- 9 Virtual APA 2020
- 9 Early Career Research Grants
- 10 Message From Outgoing NEP Editor Marcus
Johnson

Edited by Dr. Marcus Johnson & Dr. Sharon K. Zumbrunn





Message from the President

By Dr. Helenrose Fives

I truly lack the gift of giving an impassioned speech or writing a message that will help people through anything - I once chuckled my way through a funeral for our class hermit crab my second year of teaching until I couldn't continue and one of the students had to close the ceremony. And I may have been reprimanded by a cousin at my father's wake for shaking with laughter while his club (think something with the name of an animal) came in and performed some ceremony wearing hats and jeweled necklaces. In an attempt to avoid the tropes that make me cringe every time a commercial comes on these days, I am going to lean on one of my favorite songsters to offer some thoughts on educational psychology in the age of covid-19: Kenny Rogers.

Kenny Rogers, in my opinion, immortalized the song *The Gambler*; while others had recorded it, including Johnny Cash, the song never took off until Kenny. Something in his voice, his story telling - I have no idea, but the song has much to offer as we deal with our current situation - which is much like a game of poker - a whole lot of guesswork that might result in complete ruin or rewards.

You gotta know when to hold 'em. Fred Korthagen's Onion Model of Levels of Reflection (2004) can provide a sound framework for deciding what to hold on to. Typically used in teacher education and development, the levels of reflection help to identify the things that matter most for the individual with the idea being that once the core qualities are identified they can be used to inform and direct decision making (i.e., help us to know what to hold). According to Korthagen, Kim,

and Greene (2013) meaning-oriented or *core reflection* should address all six layers of the Onion Model. The six layers include: environment (what am I dealing with?), behavior (what do I do?), competencies (what am I capable of doing?), beliefs (what do I believe, in a given situation?), identity (who am I?), and mission (what inspires me; what is my idea?). If the layers of the onion are aligned, that is, if what teachers do is in agreement with their competencies, beliefs, and ideals for teaching then teachers are more effective. As we stay shut-in in our homes there are many things to miss and a multitude of distractions. Thus, core reflection might help scholars, researchers, administrators, and teachers to make clear decisions about what to hold on to in our work.



Dr. Helenrose Fives, DI5 President



You gotta know when to fold ‘em. One of the most important teaching lessons I learned as a 5th grade teacher was that sometimes it's best to just *let it go* (sorry Elsa slipped in). Research in classroom management confirms that effective classroom management typically focuses on preventive rather than reactive strategies (Korpershoek et al., 2016) but personal experience confirms for me that sometimes doing nothing or stopping is the best option. We often think of exercising control as doing something, but there is equal power in not doing something. My research partner, Nicole Barnes, and I were working with three different teams of graduate students on developing studies in their schools, two of them had IRB approval just around March 17th. Conducting a study about flexible seating in the classroom - is not going to happen (right now). We folded up those projects as neatly as Sr. Rosemarie Collins taught me how to fold fitted sheets, and put them away for

another day. The point is, just because we might need to fold a hand or two now, we're still in the game.

You gotta know when to walk away and know when to run. Teachers walk away when students don't need them anymore. Piaget wrote: "...each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered for himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely" (Piaget, 1970, p. 113). It's like someone giving you the answer to the crossword puzzle that you were just about to finish on your own. Research in cooperative learning suggests that teachers need to intervene in a group's work when students (1) don't know the answer or how to proceed, (2) are spreading misconceptions (possibly through miscommunication), and (3) when the group lacks true dialogue about the content (Ding, Li, Piccolo, & Kulm, 2007). But the opposite of all of this is also true,





if students are engaged in dialogue, getting to an accurate understanding of the content and questioning possible misconceptions the correct action is to “do nothing.” In fact, when those things happen in my classes, I tend to run, not walk away, because something about the professor/teacher presence can shut down that good work and have students looking for approval. So if something is working, we can walk away, because it will be alright. And really, taking a walk is always a good option from every self-help blog/email/facebook post I’ve seen.

Of course, one could take a different stance on this line from the song. In researching this piece, dealing with this line gave me trouble. So I “google-scholar’d” the heck of it, and while that did not lead me to any great revelations, it did lead me to an article by Anita Woolfolk Hoy (2019) in *Education Review* titled “[Academic Optimism and a Touch of Wisdom](#).” In the piece she chronicles her academic career and quotes this same line from Kenny followed by: “[s]ometimes you need to run from a relationship that is toxic” (p.11). I agree. Anita was talking about a person-to-person relationship but I’m noticing that it might be good for me to run from my computer on a regular basis as my relationship with it may be getting

toxic. I also found an article on goal disengagement, the authors provide evidence that persistence in achieving an unattainable goal had negative consequences for adolescents (Miller & Worsch, 2007). Some of my goals are constrained by the environment and cannot be achieved (right now) and a pragmatic decision is to stop trying which gives me room to pursue things that are attainable.

You never count your money while you're sitting at the table; They'll be time enough for counting when the dealin's done. Now is not the time to evaluate how well you are doing as an X (fill in the x). We’re still here, dealing. In a year from now - or more - eventually this will pass; we will re-enter our schools, labs, and lives - different but actually able to reflect with the clarity of 20-20 hindsight on how we managed this experience and hopefully learn from it. There is a quote attributed to Dewey (although, as Michael Nussbaum [has helped me discover](#), no one is actually sure where it originated) that states “We do not learn by experience, rather we learn from reflecting on experience.” So, some time, in the future, we’ll have the time to “count” what we have gained and lost in response to the pandemic - hopefully there will be some gains.

References

- Ding, M., Li, X., Piccolo, D., & Kulm, G. (2007). Teacher interventions in cooperative-learning mathematics classes. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 100(3), 162-175, 192.
- Korpershoek, H., Harms, T., de Boer, H., van Kuijk, M., & Doolaard, S. (2016). A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Classroom Management Strategies and Classroom Management Programs on Students' Academic, Behavioral, Emotional, and Motivational Outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(3), 643-680. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315626799>
- Miller, G. E., & Wrosch, C. (2007). You've gotta know when to fold'em: Goal disengagement and systemic inflammation in adolescence. *Psychological Science*, 18(9), 773-777. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01977.x>
- Korthagen, F.A. J. (2004). In search of the essence of a good teacher: Towards a more holistic approach in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 77-97. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.10.002>
- Korthagen, F.A. J., Kim, Y. M., & Greene, W. L. (Eds.). (2013). *Teaching and learning from within: A core reflection approach to quality and inspiration in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Schlitz, D.A. (1978). The Gambler [Recorded by Kenny Rogers]. *On The Gambler [Vinyl]*. Los Angeles, CA: United Artists.
- Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2019, September 25). Academic optimism and a touch of wisdom. Acquired Wisdom Series, S. Nieto, F. Erickson & P. Winne (Eds.). *Education Review*, 26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/er.v26.2751>



Executive Meeting Highlights

2020 Fall Retreat - Savannah, GA

Find full minutes for the 2019 Division 15 Fall Retreat Meeting [here](#).

- The committee for the *Psychology Today* and Policy Committee of Division 15 have moved from being Ad Hoc committees to now being standing committees;
- The Ad Hoc committee on Race and Diversity was created and chaired by Dr. Jessica DeCuir-Gunby;
- The Ad Hoc Practice Committee was created and chaired by Dr. Alysia Roehrig;
- APA Council approved that masters' students who are members can vote for the APA President;
- A committee for a new journal, concerning educational policy and practice, has been created.



Introducing Division 15's New Education Practice Briefs

The Division 15 Ad Hoc Practice Committee is pleased to present the following Practice Briefs, which have been curated to provide evidence-based guidance for educators, principals, superintendents, and other education stakeholders. These briefs are 2-page PDFs that are easy to print or share electronically. If you have any suggestions for topics to be addressed in future briefs, please contact Alysia Roehrig at aroehrig@fsu.edu. If you would like to write a brief, please see our call for proposals here.



Motivating Diverse Learners Using Culturally Relevant & Responsive Education

By Makana K. Craig & Dr. Alysia D. Roehrig

Addressing the motivational and learning needs of diverse students requires adapting educational strategies. Multicultural education, culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and self-determination theories share similarities that can be leveraged to support all students' motivation to learn.

[Read the Brief](#)



Homeschooling Under Quarantine

By Dr. Debra Bell & Dr. Avi Kaplan

Whether in normative times, or at a time of pandemic, designing home life that includes homeschooling is challenging. It means and looks different for every household, and the design should change as people grow and circumstances shift.

[Read the Brief](#)



Addressing Teacher Evaluation Appropriately

By Dr. Alyson L. Lavigne & Dr. Thomas L. Good

Given the importance of teachers, there has been intense interest in improving and evaluating teachers. Yet, many current measures of teaching effectiveness are flawed. They fail to adequately account for the content, complexity, and the variance in teacher effectiveness and practice. Because of this, teacher evaluations often yield erroneous information about the quality of teaching and student learning and do nothing to enhance student achievement.

[Read the Brief](#) - [Find Additional Resources Here](#)



Defending Your Dissertation ... Virtually...During a Pandemic

By Ashlee Lester

“No, no, I remember! It was the first day in a long line of days that I actually put on real pants.”

Social distancing has all of us saying and doing things we never thought we would need to say or do – including, for some of us, defending our dissertations via zoom. This past March, I defended my dissertation, “Disentangling Student Engagement in Afterschool Programs” and became Dr. Lester. It was a bit of a surreal experience. I had imagined the day many times... I would present my work, answer some questions, give lots of hugs, and attend a happy hour at the bar up the street from campus to celebrate. However, March 27th looked very different than anticipated. My advisor, Dr. Sharon Zumbrunn (VCU), my other committee members, Drs. Christine Bae (VCU), Michael Broda (VCU), and Nancy Deutsch (UVA), myself, and some colleagues logged onto Zoom around 10am to embark upon the uncharted territory of a Zoom defense. Following the defense, I (virtually) sat down with Dr. Zumbrunn and Dr. Bae to discuss the experience. Hopefully these reflections will resonate with your #quarantineexperience, or calm the nerves of other doctoral candidates as we navigate these trying times.

Defending virtually may in fact be our new norm for a period, and conversations such as this one will likely only grow more frequent. It feels different for sure, but it's not all bad! I presented from the comfort of my home, using my own computer and the screen share feature on Zoom. This meant that my slides showed up right in front of my face, and I was **supposed** to look at them... talk about making the presentation easier! I didn't have to memorize the presentation to the same extent as I traditionally would in any other setting. Also, everyone was on time! Perhaps a first for my incredible committee, the ease of logging on from their



Ashlee Lester

homes ensured that we got started right at 10am, and ended my anxious nerves before the defense. Plus, my colleagues were still able to join, and exit discreetly when they needed to leave. In fact, “they kinda rolled out... they could say ‘congratulations’ to you in the chat and then log off” (Dr. Zumbrunn), creating much less of a distraction than if they had walked out of the room. From this standpoint, my defense felt pretty smooth and normal.

However, it was inherently different from a traditional defense. The incorporation of Zoom introduced new (and often clumsy) social norms to the presentation, questioning, and ultimate celebration. For example, it felt somewhat strange to be in a breakout room by myself as my committee deliberated. And, there was the one moment where my advisor accidentally assigned another committee member as host and



locked herself out of the breakout room she was supposedly leading... “Wait. Where did everyone go? Who is the host? I thought I was the host?!” Despite our awkward feelings and mishaps, my committee was gracious with us, making the experience not only an enjoyable one, but also a rather comical one.

I think Dr. Bae summarized the experience perfectly when she shared, “in terms of the intellectual aspect of it, all of that happened at the same level of rigor. It was the interpersonal connection that I missed... it seemed less formal and celebratory.” Initially I was slated to defend in person in the VCU doctoral hearing room, a room designated for prospectus and dissertation defenses. A room with “a spirit of reaching a milestone and this sense of knowing just how many people it took to get to this point” (Dr. Bae). I had plans for happy hour, paella for dinner (#NationalPaellaDay), and a trip up north with my family. Instead, my chair scheduled a virtual happy hour, I defended from a home office, my family bought me flowers, and our trip up north has been postponed a year. However, what felt most important was that I still had a ton of people show up. Whether it was to the defense, to the (virtual) happy hour, or to send a text or call, I definitely felt loved and celebrated. It just looked really different than I had anticipated it looking. I had fewer hugs, and more text messages.... but I still felt like I had a team of people who were supportive of me on that day. For that reason, I suggest that if you know someone who is defending amidst this pandemic, show up. Send the text message, offer to listen to a colleague’s practice run, attend a virtual happy hour, or comment on the sappy Facebook post. We all could use a bit more to celebrate in this season as it is.

Or, in case you find yourself defending virtually... please consider these thoughts:

- Prepare for your presentation but also spend time preparing for the technology
 - Find a stable Internet connection.
 - Do a trial run with family/friends to make sure Zoom works and the PowerPoint looks right. After presenting, stay on the

call for a while. If you are going to freeze mid-defense, it's good to know that and not be caught off guard when that dreaded “unstable internet connection” message pops up.

- If you have a Mac, sign out of your apple ID on your computer (your committee members probably shouldn't see your mom's good luck text).
- Still get dressed up! This is a big deal. Help yourself get in that mindset.
- Make the presentation space as professional as possible.
- Be thoughtful about what distractions can interrupt you... the dog? kids? the doorbell ringing? Do what you need to do to isolate yourself for however long you need.
- Breathe. You have worked so hard for this. Not even COVID-19 can take that from you. Embrace the new normal, and make some major plans to celebrate when life goes back to normal. It's never too late to celebrate a huge accomplishment. You deserve it. You defended your dissertation during a global pandemic!
- Let your support system take and post the embarrassing picture. They are proud of you. You should be proud of yourself. You only do this thing once, so embrace it for all that comes with it. (Ft. my embarrassing picture attached below...)
- Oh, and lastly... thank your support system when it's over. They likely sacrifice more than we realize.

I hope these reflections are helpful to you, and I hope they normalize the experience of defending virtually. Most of all, I hope they encourage us all that we can and will make it through these difficult and awkward virtual experiences, **together**.

If you have any questions, or just want to talk about your experience, please reach out to me by email at lesteram2@vcu.edu.

APA 2020: We're Going Virtual

The American Psychological Association has announced that the 2020 convention, planned for Washington, D.C., will be moved to an exclusively digital format.

The full implications of this shift remain to be seen. However, Division 15 is dedicated to providing the best possible online experience for its members and will be working with presenters, panelists, and attendees to maintain a high-caliber program with flexible, remote attendance options.

We appreciate your patience as we work through these unprecedented times. Please know that, as plans are finalized, we will share details immediately!



Early Career Research Grants

Deadline Extension: June 1, 2020

Division 15 is pleased to invite proposals for its 2020 Early Career Research Grants.

These grants are intended for early career professionals or researchers who are working in educational psychology and who are members of our division. Funding from these grants—up to \$6,000 for each of up to three selected applicants—is designed to provide financial support for valuable research activities.

More information—including an official call and past recipients—may be found [here](#). Those with questions may email the Committee Chair, Wendy Middlemiss (Wendy.Middlemiss@unt.edu).



A Message From NEP's Outgoing Editor, Dr. Marcus Johnson



Dr. Marcus Johnson, NEP Editor

Over the past 3 years, it has truly been a pleasure being editor of the *Newsletter for Educational Psychologists* (NEP). Since taking the editorship over from Dr. David Morris (St. Mary's College of Maryland), I have experimented and aimed to elevate the relevance of NEP for Div15 members. Specifically, I have conceptualized NEP as having multiple functions, including being a communication tool of the Div15 Executive Council; a platform to highlight prominent profiles of our Division's awardees and scholars; an information source for research opportunities; and an outlet for which we can share sound mentoring advice in the world of Educational Psychology. Interviews with prominent scholars and awardees, as well as messages from past, current, and incoming Div15 presidents have been inspiring and insightful, making me feel more connected to our discipline. News from our Executive Council concerning our engagement in educational policy, participation in a congressional hearing concerning violence in schools, publishing our first policy and practice briefs, and expansion of our social media presence have collectively left me in awe of our Division's growing influence.

I am enthused by the strengths Dr. Sharon Zumbrunn (Virginia Commonwealth University) brings to the editorship of NEP, and I believe she will continue to

elevate the relevance of NEP to Div15 members. Sharon's reputation for writing, mentoring/collaborating with others on writing, and her ability to identify timely and significant voices across Educational Psychology are some of the specific strengths she brings to NEP. Please be on the lookout for the impactful pieces and stories that will appear in subsequent issues of NEP.

As I transition off the editorship of NEP during the chaotic time of the COVID-19 pandemic, I wish to express my sincere wishes for everyone to stay safe, protect yourselves, be considerate of others, and continue to be "present." Just as you are present and engaged with your students, colleagues, family, and friends, we collectively as Div15 members hope to be present for you, especially in your academic and professional endeavors. Knowing now that this year's 2020 APA Convention will be virtual, I am saddened that I will not have the opportunity to see you in-person this year. Nevertheless, I look forward to future occasions when we can share our research and stories, and celebrate milestones. Until then, I look forward to my continued service as one of the Div15's representatives on APA's Council of Representatives, and I hope to share our good works with the greater APA, and share APA's good works with you. Take care!



