

*H*istory of *E*ducation *S*ociety *N*ewsletter
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◀ No Frills, just the Facts ▶

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Looking Forward to the HES Annual Meeting
Adam Nelson, Program Chair

The 55th Annual Meeting of the History of Education Society will take place this November 5-8 at the St. Louis Hilton at the Ballpark.

This year marks several key anniversaries in the history of education, including the 50th anniversary of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Higher Education Act, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965; the 70th anniversary of the founding of UNESCO in 1945; and the 150th anniversary of the creation of the Freedman's Bureau in 1865. We will have a chance to reflect on all of these anniversaries at this year's meeting.

Also, given the historic location of St. Louis, the program features a number of panels on the history of education in our host city, from the education of American Indians before and after the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the historical intersections of race, class, schools, and urban/suburban politics in places such as Ferguson-Florissant (indeed, the program includes two complete Ferguson-related panels).

The range of panels at this year's conference is extraordinary. From the early republic to the digital age, the program features a smorgasbord of sessions on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class in the history of education. It also features distinguished panels on the history of education and war, empire, science, religion, health, labor, philanthropy, social protest, human rights, law enforcement, print culture, and cultural/political geography (including educational regionalism), as well as not-to-be-missed panels on the history of higher education, moral education, music education, and standardized testing.

We are particularly excited about this year's plenary session, "The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) at 50: A Changing Federal Role in American Education," a chance for all conference participants to discuss this legislative landmark and its legacy for our field and our nation.

As in past years, the program includes several hands-on panels concerning research methods in the history of education (including the challenges of archival research, quantitative research, oral history, GIS, and digital humanities) as well as three panels on teaching courses in the history of education (including new pedagogical strategies, new technologies, and the place—and politics—of "foundations of education" in the disciplines of history, education, and other humanities and social sciences).

We are delighted this year also to have two complete panels on publishing (both in print and online) as well as panels on professional development for graduate students, with a session on presentation skills (on Thursday evening) and a mentoring session on archival research conducted at the Missouri History Museum (on Sunday morning).

And, for the first time ever, we invite all who are cinematically inclined to enjoy "HES After Dark," a special after-dinner screening and discussion of the Marx Brothers' award-winning *Horse Feathers* (1932)—an event to kick off the meeting on Thursday evening. (Naturally, the program will allow plenty of time for socializing, and the Hilton at the Ballpark has many very comfortable venues to allow conference-goers to catch up with friends, old and new.)

Of course, our annual meeting gives us a chance to celebrate the many contributions of our colleagues. This year's conference will include several "new book" panels as well as the HES Awards Session, which will honor the winners of the Barnard Prize (for the best article by a graduate student), the Eggertsen Prize (for the best dissertation), and the HES Outstanding Book Award. And the culminating event will be Chris Ogren's HES Presidential Address, followed by the Presidential Reception and Conference Dinner.

We look forward to seeing you in St. Louis! Our hotel, the Hilton-St. Louis at the Ballpark, is right next to the Old Courthouse and overlooks Busch Stadium, home of the St. Louis Cardinals. The Gateway Arch and Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Park, as well as the Cathedral of St. Louis of France, are steps away. The hotel is surrounded by a wide range of eateries, and the renowned Missouri Botanical Garden—together with the Missouri History Museum, St. Louis Zoo, St. Louis Science Center, and St. Louis Art Museum (all located in the beautiful 1,400-acre Forest Park)—are less than three miles by taxi. The Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis has the largest collection of mosaic art in the world, and the city is home to many prominent universities, including Washington University, St. Louis University, Webster University, and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. For a quick overview of the city, see <http://explorestlouis.com/>

Visit <http://www.historyofeducation.org/our-annual-meeting/> to register for the History of Education Society 2015 Annual Meeting in St. Louis, November 5-8!

Read All About It!

In 1870 St. Louis was the 4th largest city in the United States, and boasted one of the country's best school systems. Here is a short reading list on St. Louis (and Missouri) education history.

Baumgarten, Nikola. "Education and Democracy in Frontier St. Louis: The Society of the Sacred Heart." *History of Education Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 171-193.

Diem, Sarah, and Jeffrey S. Brooks. "Integration Was a Solution, but Integration Does Not Address Quality Education': A Conversation about School Desegregation with Dr. Michael A. Middleton." *Teachers College Record* 115, no. 11 (November 2013): 1-11.

Ferguson, Philip M. "Creating the Continuum: J.E. Wallace Wallin and the Role of Clinical Psychology in the Emergence of Public School Special Education in America." *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 18, no. 1 (January 2014): 86-100.

Gardner, Donna, and John Rury. "Suburban Opposition to District Reorganization: The 1968 Spainhower Commission and Metropolitan Kansas City and St. Louis." *Urban Review* 46, no. 1 (March 2014): 125-145.

Gersman, Elinor Mondale. "The Development of Public Education for Blacks in Nineteenth-Century St. Louis, Missouri." *The Journal of Negro Education* 41 (Winter 1972): 35-47.

Graves, Karen. *Girls' Schooling during the Progressive Era: From Female Scholar to Domesticated Citizen*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1998.

Judd, Dennis R. "The Role of Governmental Policies in Promoting Residential Segregation in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area." *The Journal of Negro Education* 66 no. 3 (Summer 1997): 214-240.

Leighton, Denys P. "William Torrey Harris, 'The St. Louis Hegelians,' and the Meaning of the Civil War." *Gateway Heritage: Quarterly Journal of the Missouri Historical Society* 10 (1989): 32-45.

Phillips, Claude A. *A History of Education in Missouri: The Essential Facts Concerning the History and Organization of Missouri's Schools*. Jefferson City, MO: Hugh Stephens Printing Company, 1911. Available at: <https://archive.org/details/historyofeducati00philuoft>.

Tavares, Hannah Maria. "The Cultural Production of the Not-Yet-Filipina/o-Subject in the Discourses of the Human Sciences." *Educational Studies* 40, no. 2 (October 2006): 124-145.

Troen, Selwyn K. *The Public and the Schools: Shaping the St. Louis System, 1838-1920*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1975.

Also see "Education Collection Descriptions" at *The State Historical Society of Missouri*, <http://shs.umsystem.edu/manuscripts/descriptions/desc-edu.html>. Thanks to Dr. John Jones, Truman State University, for providing references.

Quarterly Report
History of Education Quarterly 55, no. 4 (November 2015)

See these articles in the next issue of *HEQ*:

“Reflections on a Decade of Scholarship in the History of Education,” by James D. Anderson, Yoon K. Pak, and Christopher M. Span

“Counter College: Third World Students Reimagine Public Higher Education,” by Angela Ryan

“‘An Indelible Mark’: Gay Purges in Higher Education in the 1940s,” by Margaret Nash and Jennifer Silverman

“The Right to Educate: Catholic Institutions, Federal Boarding Schools, and the Fight to Control the Flow of Pueblo Students,” by John Reynolds Gram

The farewell essay by *HEQ* editors Jim Anderson, Yoon Pak, and Chris Span marks the end of the University of Illinois team’s leadership at the helm of the journal. Their scholarly vision and careful stewardship carried the publication through challenging economic times, and brought it rather seamlessly into the digital age. The History of Education Society is grateful for the decade of selfless work, and wishes Jim, Yoon, and Chris well in their next pursuits.

A Note from the Graduate Student Committee
 Alisha Johnson, Chair, GSC

What has the Graduate Student Committee (GSC) been up to this year, you ask? As we came into the new year we each shared what we hoped to achieve through our leadership in 2015. One theme repeatedly came to the fore - we would best serve HES, and ourselves, by focusing on our graduate student **community**. The thing about community, particularly when spread across thousands of miles, various stages of the graduate school process, and myriad scholarly interests is that it doesn’t just build itself. We knew we had to be intentional as well as consistent in order for the HES to begin to be a space where scholars would automatically turn to learn and share.

To that end, we have worked to increase HES Facebook activity, and we have begun to reach out directly to graduate students who have been involved with HES in some capacity in the past. Additionally, we are working to get the word out about the annual meeting, at which we will have a handful of graduate student-oriented offerings that we hope will begin to build the kind of fellowship and scholarly connections that are so important to our survival during this nutty chapter in our intellectual and personal development. This work has only just begun, and it would be an understatement to say that we are optimistic about what the graduate student community can contribute to the broader association.

Announcements

- ✓ One Hundred Twenty-Nine members cast a ballot in the 2015 History of Education Society election. Congratulations to President-Elect Jackie Blount and incoming Director Carter Savage.
- ✓ It is time to send nominations (yourself included) for the 2015 Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will convene after the Annual Meeting to prepare a slate of candidates for the position of Vice President and for a member of the Board of Directors. Please send nominations for the Nomination Committee to Secretary Karen Graves at graves@denison.edu. The HES Board will appoint members to the Nominating Committee in November, according to the criteria articulated in the HES Constitution.
- ✓ **GRADUATE STUDENTS:** Consider submitting an application for the History of Education Society Mentoring Breakfast at the Annual Conference. For the fifth consecutive year HES will provide breakfast for a few pairs of graduate students and established scholars to support mentoring in our field. To apply, please send the following information to Karen Graves (graves@denison.edu) by 15 October.
 - Your name and contact information
 - Names of three scholars you would like to meet, in order of preference (in case your first choice(s) are unable to attend the conference)
 - Whether you prefer to meet on Friday or Saturday morning
 - Electronic copy of an essay you have written, or an outline of your dissertation, or a description of how a particular publication by the professor you would like to meet informs your own research.

Pairings will be assigned based upon the quality of the application materials, the availability of mentors, and the availability of funds. Once the pairings are made, the mentor will receive a copy of the graduate student's application and essay, or outline, or description.
- ✓ See the “Guidelines for the Professional Evaluation of Digital Scholarship by Historians” approved by the American Historical Association Council in June 2015 at <http://historians.org/Documents/Teaching%20and%20Learning/Current%20Projects/Digital%20Scholarship%20Evaluation/Guidelines%20for%20the%20Professional%20Evaluation%20of%20Digital%20Scholarship.pdf>.
- ✓ Job Opening at University of Wisconsin, Madison for an Assistant or Associate Professor of Educational Policy Studies. See http://www.ohr.wisc.edu/Weblisting/External/PVLSummary.aspx?pvl_num=84243 for more information.
- ✓ Join the History of Education Society at: [http://ordering.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/membership.asp?ref=1748-5959&doi=10.0111/\(ISSN\)1748-5959](http://ordering.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/membership.asp?ref=1748-5959&doi=10.0111/(ISSN)1748-5959).

In Memoriam
James McLachlan (1932-2015)

On June 19, 2015 James McLachlan died of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), after a lengthy illness. He was born in Danbury, Ct on March 9, 1932 and later was a student of Choate (Class of 1949) and Harvard (Class of 1954), majoring in History. After graduation he served in the US Army in Germany in the 1950s. Upon his return to civilian life he enrolled first at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, then at Columbia University where he studied with Richard Hofstadter. He contributed to *The Hofstadter Aegis: A Memorial*, edited by Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick (A. Knopf, 1974). McLachlan's doctoral dissertation became one of the seminal texts in the educational history discourse, *American Boarding Schools* (Chas Scriber's, 1970). He taught American history at several universities including Fordham and Yale.

In the 1970s he worked closely with Prof Lawrence Stone of Princeton University and contributed to the published research out of the Shelby Cullum Davis Center for Historical Studies: *The University in Society* (1976) 2 vols. His own contribution to this compendium was "The Choice of Hercules: American Student Societies in the Early Nineteenth Century," which advanced the ongoing revision of the 19th century college. This subject he expanded in a widely discussed essay "The American College in the 19th Century," published in the 1978 volume of *Teachers College Record*. In addition, he worked during this period on the ambitious Princeton alumni project of alumni biographies, not only producing definitive profiles of every graduate but a larger vision of history that could only emerge from collective biography, a topic that Prof. Stone had memorably dubbed "prosopography." The resulting scholarship (with multiple authors) – *Princetonians: A Biographical Dictionary* 5 vols. – became a model of its genre. McLachlan was principal author/editor of Volume One and contributed many of the profiles in that text. He was justly proud of profiles like that of Ashbel Green, an early Princeton president.

In the 1980s New York University's Department of History appointed him an adjunct professor of history and encouraged his creation of a course in Material Culture, which enhanced that department's pioneering Program in Public History. In these years also he became co-editor of *The History of Education Quarterly*, attracted by the journal's decade-long effort to link the specialization of educational history (largely housed in Schools of Education) with the 1960s and 1970s breakthrough scholarship of American Social History (based in History departments which largely ignored education as a research subject). His own wide reading in American and European history greatly advanced this enterprise and broadened the discourse of both scholarly parties, particularly through the *HEQ*'s emphasis on essay reviews. At the time of his death he remained at work collecting information on an authoritative data bank of 18th century collegiate populations.

McLachlan never curtailed his wide reading of social and cultural history, even after his relocation from Princeton NJ to Chapel Hill, NC. His friends considered him a historian of an older school, one which they would say appreciatively drew upon a basic liberal arts education and which made him one of the best read historians of his generation. He was justly proud of his extensive library, which reached beyond his own historic specialty.

In addition to his scholarly interests, McLachlan had three passions: one, genealogy, two, the ballet, especially George Balanchine, and three, gardens, notably garden history and design. He and his wife visited many gardens in Europe and America and over forty-odd years created three of their own.

He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Parker McLachlan, emerita professor of Art History at Rutgers University, by his sister, Marcia McLachlan Dolan, and by two nieces Debbie Dolan and Pamela Dolan Spiewak.

~~~contributed by Paul H. Mattingly

## Recent Publications

- ❖ Sevan G. Terzian and Patrick A. Ryan, eds. *American Education in Popular Media: From the Blackboard to the Silver Screen* (Palgrave Macmillan).

“*American Education in Popular Media* examines how popular media including mass magazines, radio, film, and television have represented schooling in the United States over the course of the twentieth century. Historical essays explore prevalent portrayals of students and professional educators while addressing contested purposes of schooling in American society. Terzian and Ryan highlight the educative and normative dimensions of popular media in outlining roles for teachers, students, and administrators at educational institutions ranging from elementary schools to universities.”

- ❖ Harvey J. Graff, *Undisciplining Knowledge: Interdisciplinarity in the Twentieth Century* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

“Interdisciplinarity—or the interrelationships among distinct fields, disciplines, or branches of knowledge in pursuit of new answers to pressing problems—is one of the most contested topics in higher education today. Some see it as a way to break down the silos of academic departments and foster creative interchange, while others view it as a destructive force that will diminish academic quality and destroy the university as we know it. In *Undisciplining Knowledge*, acclaimed scholar Harvey J. Graff presents readers with the first comparative and critical history of interdisciplinary initiatives in the modern university. Arranged chronologically, the book tells the engaging story of how various academic fields both embraced and fought off efforts to share knowledge with other scholars. It is a story of myths, exaggerations, and misunderstandings, on all sides.”

- ❖ The American Educational Studies Association recognized *Desegregating Chicago’s Public Schools: Policy Implementation, Politics, and Protest* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) with a 2015 Critics’ Choice Book Award. Congratulations, Dionne Danna!

“With the dual impetus of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Chicago, like so many other cities, began the process of desegregating its public school system. What resulted was a unique study in the implementation and transformation of public policy, as the city dealt with and pushed back against directives and lawsuits from both the state and federal governments. In this book, Dionne Danna provides the story of how public policy on this historic topic was formed by stakeholders at all levels, from superintendents to parents to state and federal officials, and how politics and stakeholder perceptions and protests determined outcomes for the school system.”

- ❖ See Mike Wakeford’s review of Adam Laats, *The Other Reformers: Conservative Activism in American Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015) in “U.S. Intellectual History Blog,” *S-USIH Society for U.S. Intellectual History*, 13 September 2015, <http://s-usih.org/2015/09/conservatives-and-the-history-of-school-reform.html>.
- ❖ See the new e-book *Connecting History of Education: Scientific Journals as International Tools for a Global World*, edited by José Luis Hernández Huerta, Antonella Cagnolati, and Alfonso Diestro Fernández. The 2015 FahrenHouse publication can be downloaded for free at [www.fahrenhouse.com](http://www.fahrenhouse.com). Historians of education will find the volume a useful overview of journals in different regions of the world. Editors of the book invite readers to consider particular traditions in the field as well as approaches to the study of history of education that scholars across the globe hold in common. Nancy Beadie, Joy Williamson-Lott, and Isaac Gottesman write about the *History of Education Quarterly* on pp. 137-140.

Call for Papers

1. See the Organization of American Historians 2017 Call for Proposals at <http://www.oah.org/meetings-events/meetings-events/call-for-proposals/>. Proposals will be accepted between 7 December 2015 and 23 January 2016. The conference will be in New Orleans, April 6-9, 2017.

~ ~ ~ from the call for papers ~ ~ ~

“Circulation, the theme of the 2017 OAH Annual Meeting, is everywhere evident in the historical record. Ideas, goods, information, laborers, water, currency, disease, highways, and much more, circulate. Circulation suggests movement, but also connection between points and places. It suggests movement that gives definition. From the scale of the human body to the scale of the global, from the material to the ideological, circulation characterizes many of the subjects historians study, whether migrations, pilgrimages, economies, networks, ideas, culture, conflicts, plagues or demography. Circulations link, but also separate; they populate and depopulate; and they transport and return.”

2. Proposals for the International Standing Conference for the History of Education (ISCHE) are due 31 December 2015. See <http://conferences.ische.org/ocs-2.3.6/index.php/ische/2016/schedConf/cfp> for more information. ISCHE meets in Chicago August 17-20, 2016.

3. The *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* is issuing a call for articles to be included in a special issue on education in Pennsylvania’s history scheduled for an October 2017 publication.

The editors seek submissions of the following two sorts.

- **Scholarly Articles:** The editors seek proposals for scholarly articles (25–35 pages, double spaced) featuring new research on education in Pennsylvania. Manuscripts may focus on issues having to do with pre-school and early childhood education, public schooling, private schooling, higher education, the family, and the community. Manuscripts that deal with diversity (e.g. race, ethnicity, class, and gender) are especially welcome. Selections will be made based on the quality of the submission and with an eye toward representing the full range of research in educational studies, including political history, social history, intellectual history, public history, sociology, anthropology, and urban education, among others. In addition, articles are sought that place Philadelphia or Pennsylvania within larger patterns of regional and national development.
- **Favorite Sources/Hidden Gems:** The editors seek proposals for short articles (250–750 words) featuring favorite sources/hidden gems highlighting some aspect of the educational experience in Pennsylvania history. We invite articles focusing on both written and non-written sources, including but not limited to diaries, manuscript collections, novels, government documents, oral histories, newspapers, photographs, artifacts, and monuments. These items may or may not be found in the state, but all featured items will serve to illuminate some aspect of the educational experience of Pennsylvanians. See <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5215/pennmaghistbio.135.issue-4> for example of such essays.

**Submission details:** Submissions should be addressed to Tamara Gaskell, Editor, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107 or, by e-mail, to pmhb@hsp.org.

**Guest editors:** Potential contributors are encouraged to consult with one of the two guest editors for this issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. William W. Cutler, III, Professor of History, emeritus, Temple University (wcutler@temple.edu) and Jonathan Zimmerman, Professor of History, New York University ([jlzimm@aol.com](mailto:jlzimm@aol.com)).

**Deadline for submissions:** January 1, 2016

#### 4. CALL FOR CHAPTER PROPOSALS

*The Costs of School Closure: Context and Consequences*

**EDITOR:** Ebony M. Duncan, Sociologist of Education at Washington University in St. Louis

**Abstract Deadline: December 1, 2015**

**Chapter Deadline: June 1, 2016**

Schools are key social organizations that allocate status and facilitate opportunities for upward social mobility. They are also sites where competing and contradictory public policies perpetuate deleterious educational and social outcomes—especially for underserved groups. In recent years, municipal governments across the United States have closed increasing numbers of public schools—particularly in high poverty, predominately African American neighborhoods. Recent reports on school closings in major cities like Chicago and Philadelphia suggest that the rise in school closings in the last two decades is associated with increasing charter school enrollment, municipal budget deficits, and a host of other political and contextual factors. The causes and consequences of school closings are certainly relevant to immediate neighborhoods, but they are also emblematic of inequities in educational access on a global scale.

The book series, *Research on African American Education*, is accepting manuscripts for an upcoming title, *The Costs of School Closure: Context and Consequences*. The editor of *The Costs of School Closure* seeks original, robust manuscripts on the contexts and consequences of recent primary and secondary school closures in the United States and elsewhere. The purpose of this interdisciplinary volume is to identify how recent school closures are associated with shifts in social, economic, legal, and political contexts, as well as the implications of closures for students, their families, their teachers, and their communities. Key points to consider include: school district characteristics; historical contexts of school closures; changes in education policy; reasons for closure; how social, political, and economic contexts influence closure; and implications of school closures for students, teachers, and neighborhoods (etc.).

#### **SUBMISSIONS**

Authors are invited to submit abstracts (up to 250 words) by December 1, 2015. Formal invitations for submission will be extended by February 1, 2016. Accepted manuscripts are due June 1, 2016.

**Please submit abstracts to:** [duncane@wustl.edu](mailto:duncane@wustl.edu) with “**School Closure Abstract**” in the subject line.

**Please direct any inquiries to:** Dr. Ebony M. Duncan at [duncane@wustl.edu](mailto:duncane@wustl.edu).

*Public Engagement*

"God posts guard dogs at the gates of creativity. The secret is they never bite."<sup>1</sup>  
 --Sam Wineburg

See our colleagues' commentaries on current issues:

Andrew Hartman, "The Historical Ironies of the Right-Wing Movement Against Common Core," *History News Network*, 26 August 2015, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/160421>.

Interview with Harvey J. Graff in Scott Jaschik, "Undisciplining Knowledge," *Inside Higher Ed*, 10 September 2015, [https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/09/10/author-discusses-new-book-interdisciplinarity?utm\\_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm\\_campaign=0535072d99-DNU20150910&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_1fcbc04421-0535072d99-197419157](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2015/09/10/author-discusses-new-book-interdisciplinarity?utm_source=Inside+Higher+Ed&utm_campaign=0535072d99-DNU20150910&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1fcbc04421-0535072d99-197419157).

Interview with Sam Wineburg in Rachel Toor, "Scholars Talk Writing: Sam Wineburg," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 August 2015, <http://chronicle.com/article/Scholars-Talk-Writing-Sam/232365/>.

Jonathan Zimmerman, "These Candidates Can't Take a Joke: Inside the Baffling Humorlessness of Presidential Politics," *Salon*, 25 August 2015, [http://www.salon.com/2015/08/25/these\\_candidates\\_cant\\_take\\_a\\_joke\\_inside\\_the\\_baffling\\_humorlessness\\_on\\_presidential\\_politics/](http://www.salon.com/2015/08/25/these_candidates_cant_take_a_joke_inside_the_baffling_humorlessness_on_presidential_politics/).

Jonathan Zimmerman, "4 Words That Will Get Students to Stop Binge-Drinking," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 18 September 2015, [http://chronicle.com/article/4-Words-That-Will-Get-Students/233099/?cid=at&utm\\_source=at&utm\\_medium=en](http://chronicle.com/article/4-Words-That-Will-Get-Students/233099/?cid=at&utm_source=at&utm_medium=en).

AND, Stephen Sawchuk, "Scholars Lament Decline of Ed. History Courses in Teacher Prep," *Education Week*, 15 September 2015, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/09/16/scholars-lament-decline-of-ed-history-courses.html?tkn=OWMFrdQcPUszdp7b3cZc8ux0Xy1w3GTfJuuJ&intc=es>.

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<sup>1</sup> Sam Wineburg, quoted in Rachel Toor, "Scholars Talk Writing: Sam Wineburg," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 17 August 2015, <http://chronicle.com/article/Scholars-Talk-Writing-Sam/232365/>.

Commentary

*Getting Out of the Zone of Isolation*

Rebecca Wellington

Researching and writing in the dissertation process can be isolating. That isolation in certain respects can be an asset, in terms of focus, direction and efficiency. But it can also take one down rabbit holes that lead to confusion, distraction and dreaded writer's block. Getting out of that zone of isolation for a breath of air and, more importantly, for new perspective and inspiration, is invaluable to processing the bigger dissertation project. One really productive, efficacious and fun way to get out of that zone of isolation is by attending academic conferences.

*From my experience as a doctoral candidate who is embarking upon the dissertation journey, I have found two specific benefits from attending conferences.*

First, conference experiences in our field of research have provided me with a unique opportunity to engage in personal conversations with scholars, many who have written the foundational texts that my research is building upon. It is one thing to read the research and ideas of scholars in the field, but to engage in conversation in person, asking specific questions that relate to my areas of interest has been an invaluable and inspirational experience.

Attending conferences outside the field of History of Education that relates to fundamental issues in my research provides a second benefit. In my case, attending a conference in the field of Indigenous Studies allowed for listening to and engaging in scholarly discussion that has challenged me to see my research in new ways. More importantly, it helps me question previous assumptions I had about the meaning and purpose of education and its effect on identity. This new insight has had a significant and positive impact on the direction of my research and writing. I certainly plan to continue attending conferences, especially as I continue the dissertation journey.

*Rebecca Wellington is a Doctoral Candidate in the College of Education at the University of Washington.*

Next Issue

If you have material for the next issue of the *History of Education Society Newsletter* please send to [graves@denison.edu](mailto:graves@denison.edu) by 20 December. Citations for new publications in the history of education, commentaries that place current events in historical perspective, and HES announcements particularly welcome.