

Tenure and Promotion Portfolio Narrative, Scott Ritchie, Ph.D., August 15, 2014

I am happy to have this opportunity to reflect on my four years as a tenure-track assistant professor at Kennesaw State University. As a teacher researcher, I find very valuable the critical praxis component of reflection (Freire, 1970/2005) that the tenure and promotion process provides.

In the pages that follow, I outline my teaching philosophy and argue that my contributions in the three areas of Teaching, Supervision, and Mentoring; Research and Creative Activity; and Professional Service are of the quality and significance that match the rank of Associate Professor with tenure. Because of limited space, I focus my energy on documenting how my experiences align with the descriptors of Associate and Full Professors that are new or unique to each rank (T-1, R-1, S-1, particularly the highlighted parts). Each section also includes a one page "snapshot" of my Teaching, Research, and Service (T-2, R-2, S-2). Throughout, I illustrate how social justice education, responsive teaching, and constructivist inquiry-based pedagogy serve as cross-disciplinary vehicles or themes for the way I approach my teaching, research, and service.

Teaching, Supervision, and Mentoring of Students (TSM)

Philosophy of Teaching. Like John Dewey (1916), I believe that education is a vehicle for democracy, equality, and social justice. I witnessed this firsthand during my own college experience. Growing up in the privileged position of most binary categories (White, male, upper-middle class, able-bodied, native English speaking, etc.), I held steadfast to the racism, sexism, classism, ableism, xenophobia, and overall oppressor consciousness (Freire, 1970/2005) of the elite social categories to which I belonged. I came to college as an undergraduate using the N-word frequently and debating others who challenged my racist and narrow-minded beliefs. My courses and professors opened my eyes to a new world. They completely changed my life. Through a range of experiences, over time I became determined to leverage my privilege for justice for all people. Today I want to be a catalyst for change with my students. Following the KSU mission, I strive to develop engaged citizens with global understanding and a love of learning. Like bell hooks (1994), I teach to transgress, to help students see the world differently and to rewrite it.

As a social justice educator, I know through my 20 years experience teaching in various capacities and through my research with other social justice educators across the U.S. (Ritchie, 2013) that in order to help students push their thinking toward sociocultural and sociopolitical understandings of the world, one's teaching must be responsive to students' needs, and a great deal of care must take place in building a sense of community. I try to get to know my students, listen to them, and respond to their evolving educational needs. Finally, like Paulo Freire (2004), I believe that we are all in a state of becoming in which we are curious about the world. As I have refined my teaching philosophy, I increasingly feel my role as a teacher is to tap into this curiosity, this inquisitiveness, and help students, through inquiry, discover their own passions and their own agency to change the world to make it a better place. By getting to know one's students, making teaching culturally responsive, and being knowledgeable and passionate about the content matter, a teacher's students are able to take more risks and learn more content that challenges the status quo. Rather than having students simply regurgitate information, my goal as an educator is to produce students who think critically, innovate, and ultimately change the world to make it more just, democratic, and humane.

Experiences with Teaching, Supervision, and Mentoring

Since coming to KSU, I have taught 14 courses in four different programs (EECE, EDRD, EDRS, and GWST) across two colleges (BCOE and CHSS) (vitae; T-2). This range has provided me with much opportunity to engage in pedagogical experimentation, assess instructional effectiveness through student feedback and self-reflection, and improve my techniques for working with students, accomplishments that address encouragement I was given in my third year review to continually improve my teaching.

My students have remarked about my pedagogical experimentation, saying I am "unafraid of trying different ways of executing content for the course," and "Dr. Ritchie adjusted content and assignments as needed throughout the course, so he was continually improving as we went" (T-3). In addition to being very knowledgeable, my undergraduates have commented about how I create an atmosphere that is flexible and responsive to their needs, that I am personable, and take their lives into consideration (T-4).

Being responsive allows me to experiment and update my approaches for working with students as effective facilitators of learning. Students appreciate how I ask for their feedback and model inquiry in a way

that helps them teach the inquiry process to their own students. They comment on how “he made us all feel he cared about each of us” and how, even in my classes with very strict class participation policies and heavy reading loads, it was the first time many of them read the entire textbook. Seeking feedback for improving my teaching helps me pare down my lessons to what is most beneficial: “All the activities we did were very beneficial and I feel like they served a purpose for our education. None of it was ‘busy work’” (T-5).

While I came to KSU with some organizational tools and skills, I used student feedback to become more organized and thorough in my expectations, have high expectations while also providing feedback that is both positive and constructive (T-6), establish clear and concise goals with no surprises, make content relevant and meaningful, and use new technologies (T-7). Despite having a heavy workload, my students commented on how the required readings benefited them and that the classwork and my knowledge of graduate students helped them learn (T-8). When I got behind on grading one semester while experiencing a divorce, my students were not afraid to mention it in evaluations but were also very understanding and still commented on how they “loved” the course, learned a lot, and were challenged to think differently (T-9).

In my first doctoral class, even though we read and discussed issues of racism, xenophobia, and critical theory, the students responded very positively, saying the articles were thought-provoking and that my responsive teaching made the course meaningful for them. These data are supported by my dissertation research: many teachers feel they have had limited exposure to sociocultural and sociopolitical explanations for problems such as hunger, poverty, homelessness, etc., and yearn for new ways of thinking about the world that will open their minds. Additionally, in my two sections of doctoral directed readings, when one section of two doctoral students used extremely deficit-oriented discourse to talk about children and families (“People on welfare are just stupid! They’re stupid!”), I had us regroup, engage in on-the-fly experimentation, and read the book, *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*, which I am sure challenged their beliefs but seemed to open them up more to issues of equality, democracy, and justice. Their course evaluation suggested I “gave purposeful assignments” and was “supportive” (T-10).

In another doctoral class in which we read and discussed a range of critical theories that called into question the homophobic and deficit-oriented remarks I heard during class discussions, students reported

that the course “challenged me more than any other class I have taken at KSU,” while giving stellar reviews. In a different course, one student in particular was very upset and angry about the readings, saying studying racism, multiculturalism, and LGBTQ topics had no place in our college classroom. These ideas came through clearly on the course evaluation, but that they “should in no way cast negative light on Dr. Ritchie.” The other parts of the evaluation indicated that my responsiveness, flexibility, and caring approach outweighed the challenging content matter. Finally, in my most recent GWST course with undergraduates, in spite of some controversial material about sexuality and gender identity, students made comments indicating the class was thought provoking, broadened their perspective, and challenged them to think in new ways (T-11). I can say with confidence that I have sharpened my teaching, especially since my last review.

A powerful mechanism I use in my teaching to obtain formative assessment data is the use of midpoint checks. Around the halfway point each semester, I give students an anonymous, informal assignment to tell me how things are going (T-12). This midpoint check serves as an incredibly valuable tool; one that I have used in every class and will continue to use because it allows me to make immediate adjustments and improvements to the class to meet students’ needs and improve student learning.

One of the responsibilities of a full professor that I have had the fortune to take on is modeling instructional leadership. I have been invited to guest lecture in different capacities: as a content expert on Freire’s teaching in ECE 9250, culturally responsive pedagogy and multicultural education in EDUC 2120 and INED 4430, social justice education in ECE 4404, and effective writing pedagogy through teaching in the Kennesaw Mountain Writing Project Summer Institute. One of the online courses I developed, EDRD 7715, has also served as an instructional model for other instructors (T-13).

Often, we don’t hear enough praise from students. I have received unsolicited emails from students suggesting that (a) the course I taught was one of the best of a student’s graduate career, (b) that my feedback and encouragement helped prevent a student from dropping out of her specialist program (she has now gone on to pursue a doctorate, as well), and (c) that I had the most impact of any professor on a particular student, so she wanted me to be her dissertation chair (T-14). Additionally, on two separate

occasions, students named me as making a difference in their lives when surveyed by Career Services (T-15), and one student designated me for special recognition at the University Scholars ceremony (T-16).

Finally, an Associate Professor “develops new courses, course materials, and other pedagogical innovations” . . . “that incorporate their own research” (Full Professor) (EECE T&P Guidelines; T-1). I have had experience developing new courses and course material in several capacities since coming to KSU and incorporating my research. Working with Patti Bullock, I helped lead a team of other faculty interested in teaching a themed methods cohort called “Social Justice TOSS” (Teaching of Specific Subjects). For this themed cohort, I redesigned the ECE 4404 course syllabus around my research on critical literacy and social justice education and marketed the cohort around four themes identified in my dissertation research (T-17). This work would ultimately lead to a refereed publication, international conference presentation, and two external grants. Additionally, I served on a cross-departmental and cross-college team that designed four new graduate programs in Curriculum & Instruction (certificate, M.Ed., Ed.S., and Ed.D.). During this process I designed the syllabus for a new course, “Equitable Decision Making for Middle & Secondary Education” that incorporated my research on equity and social justice (T-18). In my own department, I led a team of six faculty in developing two new entire degree programs, an Ed.S. and Ed.D. in Early Childhood Education, during which I developed three courses, ECE 8180, 9100, and 9150 (T-19). I developed two new courses for Gender and Women’s Studies, GWST 3070 and 3080, into online and hybrid versions (T-20). Finally, I developed new qualitative research modules for EDL 7900 (T-21). These examples demonstrate my cross-disciplinary work in course and program development that incorporates my research.

Research and Creative Activity

Since my last review, I have made great progress in research and creative activity. Department guidelines for RCA appear in (R-1). A snapshot of my work in RCA appears in (R-2). My Third Year reviewers encouraged more refereed publications, presentations, and external funding, which I address in this section. Additionally, I name each publication and presentation within the narrative.

Publications. In this section, after each publication, I include in parentheses statistics (when available) as well as in print-outs after each publication on how many times the publication has been viewed (V) and how

many times it has been downloaded (D) from my own personal pages on Academia.edu and ResearchGate to show some measure of impact.

In 2012 I published a solo-authored article, "Incubating and sustaining: How teacher networks enable and support social justice education," in the *Journal of Teacher Education* (R-3). The high quality of the work is demonstrated by the rigorous review process through which it underwent in a top-tier journal with an acceptance rate of 6% (V=189; D=38). It is significant because one of my colleagues, Dr. Sohyun An, nominated this article for the KSU Foundation Prize for Publication, and it was named a finalist for the university prize (R-4). Further, several faculty in INED and SMGE have shared with me how they assign it in their courses. In 2013 I published an invited article on culturally relevant pedagogy for their newsletter, *What's the IDEA?*. My article, titled, "Reclaiming sociopolitical critique within culturally relevant pedagogy," appeared as the headlining piece in the Spring 2013 issue of the newsletter (R-5). This piece was high quality because it underwent editorial review and represented scholarship based on my dissertation research. It is significant because it led to a conference presentation at the Sources of Urban Educational Excellence conference (V=128; D=38).

In response to a call for papers, I invited Neporcha Cone, Sohyun An, and Patti Bullock to co-author a manuscript about our Social Justice TOSS experiences. Our article, "Teacher education for social change: Transforming a content methods block," was published in *Current Issues in Comparative Education* in 2013 (R-6). This work is high quality because it underwent rigorous peer-review in a highly-esteemed international journal (V=234; D=101). It is significant because it represents the culmination of a cross-disciplinary collaborative research project. Furthermore, as a result of this article's publication, I was invited to apply for and was awarded two grants from the Open Society Foundations, and the four of us were invited to submit a conference proposal for an international conference. Moreover, we found the article was significant to others, as well, when a faculty member in elementary education at UGA told us her department was reading our article as inspiration (R-7). "Teaching for social justice in three voices," a solo-authored article, was published in the *Journal of Critical Thought and Praxis* in the winter of 2013/2014 (R-8). This work is high quality because it went through peer review in a national journal. It is significant not only because it demonstrates

my involvement in research but also because I use the themes generated from this research in my coursework (T-17), in my conference presentations, and in collaborative work I do in schools and with graduate students (V=160; D=6).

A book chapter in the form of an encyclopedia entry has been fully accepted and is in press. It is scheduled to be released this fall. My publication, "Egocentrism in self and society," will appear in the *Encyclopedia of Diversity and Social Justice* (R-9). This work generating book chapters is high quality because it went through editorial review and significant because it draws upon my work teaching and researching ECE 9100 Cognitive Processes and Educational Practice. Finally, a poem I wrote called "Sensitivity" (R-10) that I have performed at numerous spoken word venues has been submitted and is under review at literary journal, *The Southern Tablet*. This work, if published, is high quality because it will have gone through editorial review, and it is significant because it integrates my work in masculinity studies with childhood and adolescent development.

Additionally, I am currently working on drafts of three manuscripts, including one from my dissertation research, "Radicalizing events and mentors: Key influences on teaching for social justice" (R-11), as well as an article with my doctoral student Whitney Spooner, titled, "Exploring disability with first graders" (R-12) and another co-authored manuscript with my former GRA Dudgrick Bevins based on our study of transgender children's literature, titled "Disrupting Genderism in Schools: A Critical Analysis of Transgender Trade Books (R-13). Further, I am including in Binder 3 four publications from my time before I came to KSU including: "Culturally relevant pedagogy for science education," "Coaches coaching coaches," and two books reviews: my review of the book *Literacy as a civil right: Reclaiming social justice in literacy teaching and learning* and my review of the book *Literacy Assessment & Intervention for K-6 Classrooms* (2nd ed.) (R-14). These prior publications demonstrate some of the strands that run through my research and teaching: culturally relevant pedagogy, literacy for social justice, and Freirean teacher education. An overall snapshot of my research from research website aggregators such as Google Scholar appear in (R-15).

Presentations. The Assistant Professor RCA criteria state that Assistants "[p]resent at local and state juried conferences at professional societies or organizations" (EECE T&P Departmental Guidelines). My record

clearly shows I am exceeding in this category, with only one regional juried presentation since I have been at KSU, while the rest were international (N=11) and national (N=8) (see R-1).

In 2010, I presented "Walking the talk: How eight P-12 educators came to teach critically" at Global Conversations in Literacy Research (R-16). In this seminar, I disseminated to an international audience results from my research with teachers across the United States who enact social justice pedagogies. I have presented four research sessions at the Literacies for All Summer Institute of the National Council of Teachers of English put on by the International Whole Language Umbrella. In 2011, I presented "Critical literacies, critical inquiry, and community: Three case studies," which showcased three case studies of teachers I interviewed during my dissertation research (R-17). This session was one of 10 sessions featured in the conference preview. In 2012, I co-presented two sessions with four of my doctoral students at KSU.

Wendy Harris, Karen Kraeger, Tiffany Proctor, and I presented "Co-constructing spaces for student agency: Critical discourse analysis in K-8 settings," which highlighted the discourse analysis work these students conducted in our ECE 8120 class (R-17) and was showcased by NCTE with the "Bell Ringer" honor. I also co-presented "Critical literacy with first graders: Reclaiming joy through inquiry, collaboration, and action" with doctoral student Whitney Spooner, whose dissertation I am chairing. We disseminated our collaborative research conducted in her Cobb County classroom. I have included photos from these two sessions in (R-17). In 2013, again I brought a KSU student to co-present with me, my former graduate research assistant Dudgrick Bevins with whom I conducted research on transgender representations in children's literature. Our session was titled "Transgressing transphobia: How teachers can support gender variant students in the ELA classroom" (R-17). These examples demonstrate my work at the Full Professor level in presenting at international juried conferences and conducting cross-disciplinary research projects that integrate my teaching, research, and service on social justice education, critical literacy, inquiry, and gender studies.

Since 2010, I have presented at the National Council of Teachers of English annual convention three times. In 2010 I presented "Walking the talk: What we can learn from critical educators" that disseminated findings from my research with social justice educators (R-18). In 2012, I presented a session on "Negotiating critical literacy in the middle grades: Interrogating stereotypes with Latino students" in which I

shared my research on culturally relevant critical literacy education. In 2013, I presented "Using historical and personal narratives to address issues of race, ethnicity, and religion" that disseminated results from my interviews with teachers as well as my classroom research with preservice teachers around social justice education (R-18). In November, I will present "Never too young for fairness: Using LGBTQ themed literature with elementary children" that integrates my cross-disciplinary research on literacy and gender and sexuality studies. Additionally, I presented for the first time last year (2013) two presentations at the Literacy Research Association: "Disrupting genderism in schools: A critical analysis of transgender trade books," and "Teacher identity and agency in a critical literacies course" (R-19).

I have presented three sessions at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, education's premier research association. In 2012, I presented an international session, "Incubating and sustaining: How radicalizing networks support teacher education for social justice" (R-20). In 2013, I presented "Teaching for social justice in three voices" (R-20). And in 2014, I co-presented a cross-disciplinary Arts Based Educational Research pre-conference session, "Beyond the masks" with five colleagues from KSU (R-20). Additionally, there are three conferences I have presented at one time. In 2014, I co-presented with Dudgrick Bevins, "Disrupting genderism in schools: A critical analysis of transgender trade books" at the JoLLE@UGA national conference (R-21). Also in 2014, I co-presented with Neporcha Cone and Sohyun An (Patti Bullock could not participate) an international session, "Teacher education for social change" at the Conference of Comparative and International Education (R-22). In 2014 I co-presented along with Sohyun An, Corrie Davis, Jillian Ford, Paula Guerra, Leena Her, Patty McHatton, and Joe Norris, "Beyond the masks: A participatory performance exploring issues of inclusion/exclusion in schools and beyond" at the International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (R-23). Finally, in November, I will present an international session at the National Women's Studies Association annual conference, "Not born in the wrong body: How cisnormativity lies and elides" based on my cross-disciplinary research in gender, queer studies, and children's literature (R-24). Overall, these national and international presentations at premier professional associations demonstrate high quality, significant work. The ways in which I integrate my teaching, research, and service around similar themes shows a clear research agenda and strengthens the

impact of my work. Besides peer-reviewed work, my teaching, scholarship, service to schools, and activism have attracted invitations to present and conduct workshops. In (R-25) I include programs, thank you letters, and photos of several invited presentations that are listed in full detail on my vitae.

Finally, my research and scholarship has been honored on two separate occasions at KSU. First, the EECE Research and Scholarship Committee honored me on the cover page of its inaugural newsletter, *Research & Scholarship Review*, in a faculty spotlight (R-26). Second, GWST started a "Faculty Focus" scholars program at its monthly meetings in January 2012, and I was invited to be its first scholar (R-27). **Grants.** As my vitae and RCA Snapshot (R-2) show, I have applied for a total of \$42,687 and have received approximately \$24,750 since arriving at KSU, \$6,200 of which is from external foundations. The number of external grants since my third year review, when it was suggested I apply for external funds, has increased 200%. I am currently in contact with Dierdre Williams from Open Society Foundations about additional external grant opportunities and have an internal award under review, as well (R-28).

Professional Service

Although service is not a focus area on my FPA/ARD, my record shows I am exceeding in this area, based on Associate and Full Professor criteria (S-1). A snapshot of my service appears in (S-2). Since this is not a focus area, I will elaborate in less detail and will refer reviewers to my vitae and binder as evidence.

Department. Lists of all departmental standing committees show that I am/was a member of Research and Scholarship, M.Ed. Applicant Review, Ed.S./Ed.D Applicant Review (currently chair), and the DFC (S-3). In addition, I have served on an Elementary Literacy Search Committee, as a multi-year evaluator of M.Ed. Conferences, as M/Ed. Cohort Coordinator for two years (S-4), and on a faculty learning community (FLC) for literacy. I took a leadership role in my department when I was named departmental Coordinator of Ed.S./Ed.D. Programs. During my tenure in this role, I successfully led a team of six faculty in developing two entire advanced degree programs from start to finish using a backward design process. We started with performance outcomes (standards), developed assessments, and then mapped existing courses and wrote new courses to align with the standards and assessments (S-5). These programs went through TEC, GPCC, and the BOR and started enrolling Summer 2013. In addition, I recruited and led nine faculty to develop all

existing face-to-face Ed.S. and Ed.D. classes into additional fully-online versions to provide more course delivery options to students. Our programs will go fully online in Summer 2015.

College. I serve on the Candidate Advisory Council and have served on an SMGE Literacy Search Committee, the TQP Elementary Student Learning Team, a team of reviewers of GRA proposals, as an editorial reviewer for a colleague, and a member of the Parliament of Owls faculty writing group (S-6).

EPP. I serve on the Advanced Program Coordinators (APC), EPP Ed.S./Ed.D. Steering Committee, Research Task Force (I am one of only 4-5 full-time faculty SACS qualified to teach qualitative research methods), and served formerly as a member of the Ed.S./Ed.D. Design Team, the Curriculum and Instruction Design Team, and an EPP-wide FLC on "Creating Safe Schools for GLBTQIQ K-16 Learners" (S-7).

University. I have been serving on the Institutional Review Board, Presidential Commission on GLBTIQ Initiatives, as a campus-wide QM Peer Reviewer, and an active member of Gender & Women's Studies (see detailed letter from Coordinator Laura Davis on my role there). I also have served as a teacher in the Kennesaw Mountain Writing Project and as a mentor to the KSU Student Safe Space program (S-8).

Hopefully the connection is clear between my teaching of social justice and gender topics, my research, and my service/activism, but to give one particular example of how all three integrate, in 2013 I received an email from a colleague at GSU concerned about Cobb County School District's code of conduct for student teachers (CCSD is where we place the most education students) (S-9). I felt that the language of the policy was unfair to any non-heterosexual teachers because it forbade discussion of one's sexual orientation, which often de facto means one's romantic partners. Surely heterosexual teachers would not stop talking about their husbands, wives, boyfriends, and girlfriends because of this policy; it was clearly aimed at preventing discussion of sexual *practices*. I contacted Anete Vasquez in CEPP and the GLBTIQ Commission, and we drafted more inclusive language that was eventually adopted by the school district for student teachers (S-9).

Professional Associations. I serve on the Editorial Review Board of *Language Arts* journal, NCTE's elementary journal. I also conduct reviews for *Action in Teacher Education* and *Talking Points*. I serve on the Executive Board of the Center for Expansion of Language and Thinking (CELT), a small nonprofit consulting group of many of the world's finest literacy scholars. I have served in various leadership roles through the

American Educational Research Association special interest group, Critical Educators for Social Justice, most recently on their executive board as Communications Co-Chair in charge of designing a newsletter, designing/maintaining a webpage, running a listserv, and updating a Facebook page. I was also in charge of the annual Graduate Student Forum mentoring session at AERA (S-10). As the documents in this section also show, I have served as a conference proposal reviewer for AERA and as a discussion leader for NCTE.

Schools. As mentioned before, I served on a TQP Elementary School Student Learning Team that met in schools. I took a leadership role as facilitator of a Critical Friends Group protocol that helped academic coaches, administrators, and teacher more closely examine student work to improve instruction. In December 2012 I co-facilitated a session for coaches and in the spring I mentored coaches and teachers as they used the protocol. Additionally, I co-researched and co-taught with first grade teacher Whitney Spooner when her students decided to take action to help students with disabilities (S-11).

The community. I interned for a year with community organization Men Stopping Violence to learn ways men can make communities safer for women and girls. Through this work, I brought MSV to campus for Gender Focus Week and have since started a partnership between MSV and KSU that is underway, cutting across campus via the BCOE, GWST, and the Women's Resource Center. Additionally, I have taught and volunteered at Freedom University, Metro Atlantans for Public Schools, and Georgians for FREADom (S-12).

Mentoring colleagues. Finally, I have mentored faculty through KMWP and through my experiences with Social Justice TOSS in my department (S-13). As my experience and leadership at KSU grow, I hope to continue to mentor colleagues in areas where I have expertise.

Conclusion

As the enclosed evidence shows, based on my Departmental T&P Guidelines, I have met the requirements for tenure and am performing at the rank of Associate Professor in Teaching, Supervising, and Mentoring; Research and Creative Activity; and Professional Service. I made improvements in the areas identified in my third year review and have striven to achieve not only in the Associate Professor rank, but in many areas of the Full Professor rank, as well. I am thankful to reflect on my work thus far and look forward to continuing to engage in cross-disciplinary work that improves my teaching, research, and service.