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Ten Questions for Faculty Series

The Teaching and Learning Center is pleased to present the *Ten Questions for Faculty Series*. The series is dedicated to helping faculty to stay connected with one another while working remotely. Every week, a faculty member will have the opportunity to answer ten questions about themselves and about navigating the changes brought about by COVID-19. This week, we are pleased to feature Dr. Anne Angstrom, Professor of Education.



Dr. Anne Angstrom
Professor of Education

Where are you from?

I grew up in Glasgow, Kentucky, a small town in the southcentral area of the state. I have also lived in Bowling Green and Lexington. My husband and I moved to Auburn, Alabama, for graduate school and returned home to Kentucky before moving to Naples in 2002.

Which college or university did you attend?

I have a B.A. in English and Spanish Education from the University of Kentucky; an M.A. in School Counseling from Western Kentucky University; and a Ph.D. in English Education from Auburn University. I love being a student and could go to school forever! My dream is to earn a master's in library science or creative writing.

When did you begin teaching at FSW?

I was a full-time faculty member, split between Developmental Studies and English, at Edison Community College for the 2000-2001 academic year while I was writing my dissertation and my husband was still in clinical rotations in his veterinary medicine program at Auburn. Both our parents were living on the east and west coasts of Florida at the time, so we thought we wanted to live here. However, we returned home to Kentucky for job opportunities before moving back to Florida. I rejoined what had become Edison College in 2008 in the English Department and moved to the School of Education in 2012 when we began the Middle Grades Language Arts program.

What made you become interested in your academic discipline?

I am a lifelong reader who is passionate about the study of languages and literature. I had grand dreams as a young college student of becoming a multilingual diplomat and living in international locations. When the Gulf War broke out in 1990, I had to cancel an opportunity to spend a semester in Spain. Becoming a teacher wasn't even on my radar, even though I was a student worker in the Dean's office of the College of Education. It was when I worked as an academic camp counselor for underprivileged children on U.K.'s campus one summer that I realized how much fun teaching really is and how important a teacher's impact on young people can be.

What is your favorite food?

I am not sure I could narrow my preferences to a favorite because I simply love to eat! Food is so closely associated with place and memory, so I have some special Southern comfort foods that take me back to childhood. I also love Mediterranean-inspired salads and Pacific Rim seafood.

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and what would you ask them?

I would need a big table with lots of chairs! I am fascinated by stories of people who have fought tirelessly for social justice and environmental issues through their individual modes of activism. I'd love to hear them talk about how they maintained fervor and commitment despite challenges they faced. Make room for FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt, Lincoln, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Rachel Carson, Mother Theresa, Dr. King, Gloria Steinem, Ruth Bader Ginsburg... I need a banquet hall.

What is your favorite local restaurant?

I live in Naples, so I like to eat at USS Nemo, Osteria Tulia, The Turtle Club, and The French. And, as a Southern girl, I will always love Cracker Barrel.

What new things have you learned or done as a result of COVID-19 & working remotely?

While it isn't always ideal, working from home has allowed me to be far more productive in my professional life and has given me some precious time back for focusing on things that matter, but that I had neglected, due to time constraints. A 50-minute one-way commute has been reduced to five seconds. I have been able to extend my professional commitments to college-wide service and committee work in a way that has not been possible until this year. An unexpected benefit—seeing all of my students' faces on the screen at once has allowed me to experience a sense of immediacy and personal connection with each one that I never anticipated. I have truly enjoyed the Live Online modality for how it prompted me to re-envision instructional approaches; allowed faculty to model resolve and creative problem solving in unexpected circumstances; and made courses accessible, safe, and efficient for everyone involved.

What are you doing (exercise, cooking, reading, etc.) to take care of your mental and physical health during social isolation?

I have an embarrassing book buying habit and can't read fast enough to keep up with the Amazon deliveries. The upside of this is that I have carved out a few minutes in the early dawn, before everyone else awakens, for reading and watching morning prayer from Washington National Cathedral and the Canterbury Cathedral. I also do virtual hikes and city walks available on YouTube while walking on my treadmill. Did you know you can hike through just about any national park, walk the streets of Paris, or watch live cams from various hotels in Venice? YouTube has kept my love of travel alive!

What advice do you have for your colleagues on how to navigate social isolation and changes from COVID-19?

When I notice I am slipping into feelings of doom and despair, which I am told is perfectly normal in times like these, I bring my focus back to gratitude. I am passionate about the work I do, so I am grateful

for my career opportunities and colleagues, my family, and a small group of close friends whom I communicate with regularly. I also turn to wisdom of others for support and inspiration. I keep close to me a poem by Wendell Berry, who was my professor at UK many years ago, entitled, "The Peace of Wild Things":

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night at the least sound
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

If you would like to be featured in the *Ten Questions for Faculty Series*, please contact Kelly Westfield, Coordinator of Marketing & Technology for the Teaching and Learning Center: kwestfield@fsw.edu



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