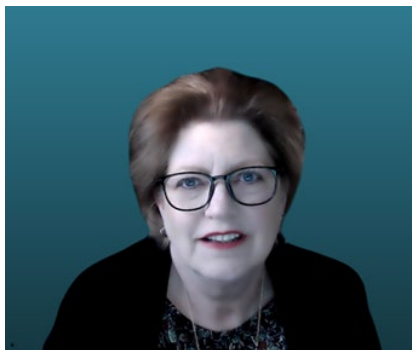


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Subject: Ten Questions for Faculty Series
Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 2:03:31 PM
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The Teaching and Learning Center is pleased to present the *Ten Questions for Faculty Series*. The series is dedicated 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. Caroline Seefchak, Professor of Reading and Literacy.



Dr. Caroline Seefchak
Professor, Reading and Literacy

Where are you from?

I am originally from New York, NY. I grew up on Long Island and moved to Florida when I was elementary school age.

Which college or university did you attend?

I attended Barry University, (B.A., English); Nova Southeastern University, (M.S., Education); and Northcentral University, (Ph.D., Curriculum and Learning). I also spent time at Appalachian State University and the Harvard Graduate School of Education and have post-graduate certificates from each.

When did you begin teaching at FSW?

I began teaching developmental English at what was then Edison State College in 2009. I was Department Chair of Developmental Studies for almost four years - until Senate Bill 1720 ended formal developmental education in Florida. In 2014, I had the opportunity to join the School of Education, and I have been Professor of Literacy Education since.

What made you become interested in your academic discipline?

As Professor of Literacy, I work to prepare teachers for what I consider to be the most important jobs on the planet. I am a life-long educator, and I cannot think of a time in my life when I was not interested in my academic discipline and in the importance of a teacher's role in establishing confidence and empathy in students through reading and literature.

What jobs or positions have you held that were formative for you and from which you draw experience that shapes your approach to teaching?

The position I held as Professor and Chair of Developmental Studies, nearly a decade ago was, without a doubt, the most formative for me. During that time, I worked with a most amazing Dean, from whom I learned more than I learned from all my degrees combined. Those experiences shaped who I am as a professional and even as a person.

What is your favorite food and favorite local restaurant?

Though my favorite food is pizza, my favorite local restaurant, The Veranda, does not serve it. I have not been to The Veranda since the pandemic hit, but it is a definite favorite.

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

Ruth Bader Ginsburg. I would thank her for all she has done for women's rights, and I would seek her advice on how to positively influence future educators within a polarized and often willfully ignorant society.

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

Life is entirely different now than it was just about a year ago; however, I do not believe my overall outlook on life has changed much, other than being extremely grateful. I don't think I thought as much about how fortunate I am as I have in recent months. I am grateful for my health, my family, my friends, and my career. I feel very, very blessed.

COVID-19 has increased online learning, and as a result, the need for promoting inclusivity in virtual learning environments. What ideas can you share with your colleagues about how to ensure inclusivity in the virtual classroom?

Being culturally responsive and promoting inclusivity is important in the School of Education because we are modeling professional teaching to future teachers. In virtual classrooms, with students feeling the myriad stresses of the pandemic, I believe kindness and empathy cannot be overrated. Since COVID, I have employed much more flexibility in my teaching, sharing with my students that during tough times, you have to be able to bend – or you will break!

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

More than anything, I want to believe the COVID-19 pandemic has made many of us more conscious of our responsibilities to each other and to society as a whole. We have to care about each other. This early twentieth century quotation captures my general thoughts for today: "Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but are manifestations of strength and resolution." (Kahlil Gibran)

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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