

WINTER 2021

NAPOMLE



AMLE 2020

A huge thank you to all who participated in the virtual AMLE conference last fall. It was great to "see" everyone and still have the opportunity to share the great work everyone is doing across the nation.



OVERVIEW:

- Welcome from the president
- Upcoming Events 2021
- SEPOMLE Symposium

Pay NAPOMLE membership dues [here](#).

See award descriptions and nominate a deserving colleague [here](#).



NAPOMLE Presidential Ponderings (P²)

HILARY DACK

When I was 17, I agonized over what to include as my senior quote in the high school yearbook. It needed to be to be pithy and memorable without being pretentious or cliché. I devoured long lists of famous quotes searching for a saying that was equal parts funny, poignant, clever, and wise. I won't confess how much time I spent doing this.

Looking back, I have no idea what I expected to find or why this seemed so important. I'd recently decided to major in English when I started college the following year. Maybe I thought that experiencing deep angst while writing was the sign of a true English major and wanted to prove myself worthy of the discipline.

I never found what I thought I was looking for. Instead, I came across a simple saying that made me happy when I read it and felt true. The quote was attributed to a British sundial. It read: "Look toward the sun, and the shadows will fall behind you."

I picked this quote, turned it in to the yearbook editor, and never thought of it again. Until 2020.

Throughout this past year of extreme challenge and uncertainty, my senior quote repeatedly worked its way into my mind. The saying seemed determined to maneuver itself to the forefront of my thinking, whether invited or not. Surprised by its persistence, I paused over winter break to consider its meaning.

Of course, this quote means something different to me in 2020 than it did when I was 17. What strikes me most at this moment is the conscious choice the saying implies. We choose to turn our gaze away from the shadows and up toward the sun. The shadows don't disappear. But we purposefully spend some time focused on the light.

In my own professional and personal life, this light took many forms in 2020. Often, it took the form of updates from local middle school teachers - former students and friends - as they found joy and fulfillment amidst the challenges of remote teaching.

In April, a 7th grade math teacher told me that, once she put extra effort into reaching out to each of her students through private chat messages, she found her students were hungry to connect. For many students, the anxieties of being the center of attention in a face-to-face class had often prevented them from opening up. But in this teacher's online classroom, through quick daily messages, she was able to build stronger relationships than ever as she reinforced how much she cared about her students' wellbeing.

She also told me that, during the pandemic, her students seemed to thank her more than they did before. One student sent her an email that read, "Thank you for turning math into something that I actually want to learn. I appreciate you checking on me and making sure I am doing alright and understanding. I am really happy I get to see you and talk to you every day."

In August, a teacher I know who had taught elementary English learners for twelve years moved into her first middle grades position with some trepidation about teaching early adolescents. By September, all she could talk about was how much she enjoyed the creativity and earnestness of this age group now that she truly understood who humans are at this stage of development. She tuned into a language arts class that she was co-teaching one day and had a hard time keeping a straight face when she heard the following middle school exchange:

"Hey, how's your dating life going these days?"

"I gotta admit - it's pretty lame. I think I'll take a year off from dating. How 'bout you?"

"Not me. I'm a single Pringle ready to mingle."

In October, a 6th grade social studies teacher who had graduated from our program in May sent me a heartwarming email that said: "Do you remember how you used to talk with us about how important it is for middle school teachers to be flexible, Dr. D? Well, now I know what you meant. And I know that I CAN DO IT!" Despite many challenges, he had determined, "My students keep showing up, willing to learn – so I do too."

In addition to these moments of light shared with me by inservice teachers, I have focused on the profound eagerness of our preservice teachers at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to learn how to serve early adolescents effectively in a time of crisis. I have been awed by their dedication to exploring pedagogies of anti-racism and social justice, their excitement at joining their first professional learning community through AMLE's virtual conference in November, and their persistence in the face of challenges they could never have imagined.

In November, I assumed the role of President of NAPOMLE. I am privileged to serve this organization because my NAPOMLE membership has made me a better teacher educator. I am eager to work with each of you in the coming years. Please contact me at hdack@uncc.edu to share any suggestions you may have for our organization's agenda for this year.

As we begin a new semester of teaching and of learning, I wish you good health and many opportunities to look toward the sun.

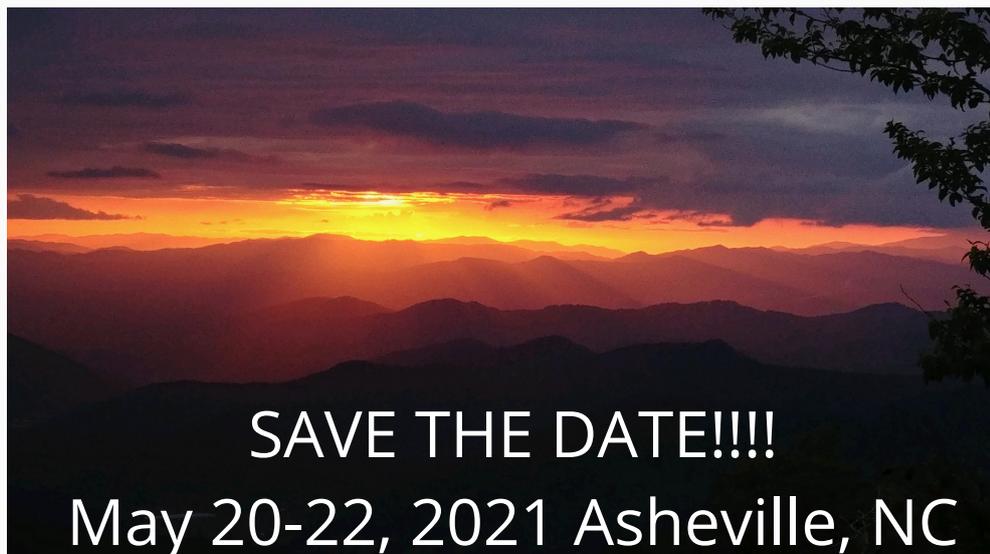
UPCOMING EVENTS

CALL FOR BEST PRACTICE SESSIONS: WILL BE SENT OUT
IN MARCH, PROPOSALS DUE LATE APRIL

AMLE 2021: 48TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE THURSDAY,
NOVEMBER 4, 2021 - SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2021
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

SEPOMLE

SYMPOSIUM



Thursday afternoon opening, brainstorming, creation, reflection and social;

Friday all day, (live only and/or recorded)

Saturday- next steps: writing sessions, product sharing, webinar planning

Follow-up: online webinars....

Proposals due 1/15/21

[Proposal Link](#)

Purpose

“Reflecting on the past while preparing for the future”

Topics to Explore:

Reflect on the past while preparing for the future

Reflect on best practices from the Current Environment:

-Remote Learning,

-Racial Equity and Social Justice,

-Health and Well-being

-Social Emotional Learning

Reflect on and celebrate successes in Teacher Preparation/
Accreditation

Reflect on what is needed now in colleges of education and
middle
schools

If you have any questions, contact Nancy Ruppert
828-606-7446. * Pending based on COVID; if there is no F2F we
will definitely meet virtually!!!!!!

