

# The Cruel Optimism of #teacherquittok

55%

of educators are thinking about leaving the profession earlier than they had planned. (NEA)



20%

more teachers than usual who say they might leave in the next two years. (EdWeek)



84%

of teachers said teaching is more stressful than it was before the COVID-19 pandemic. (EdWeek)



## Research Questions

How do teachers talk about their feelings as they leave education? Do they resign expressing optimism? Or, do they express feelings of abandonment as they leave their classrooms, students, and colleagues? Why do the expressions of those feelings matter? What potential effects have those affective expressions produced?



## Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Affect Theory: Berlant's (2011) "Cruel Optimism"

Cruel Optimism is "when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your own flourishing" (p. 1)

## Methodology

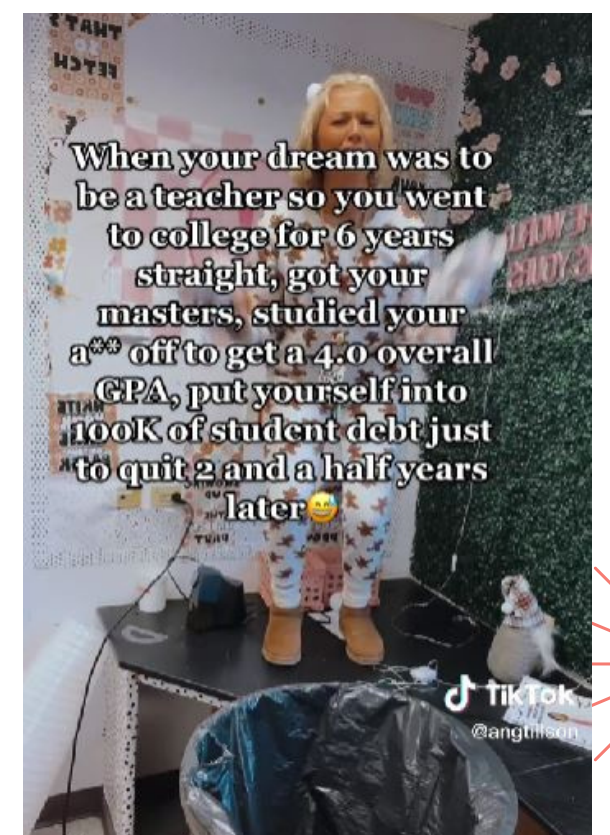
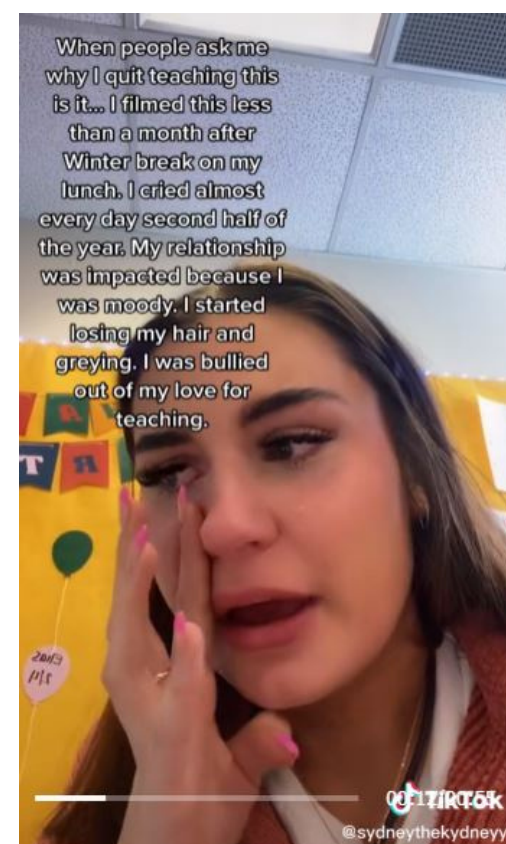
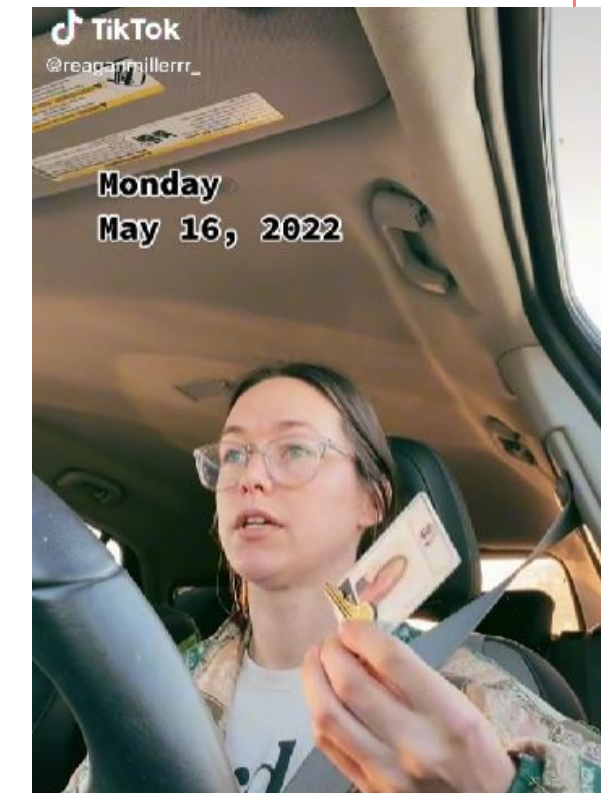
We utilize post-qualitative "readings" through what we call "affective thinking" to refractively journal how the TikTok videos affect our feelings towards and with the teachers documenting their exits.



## AERA 2023 Proposal



Please check out our full AERA 2023 proposal for this work here. Feedback is greatly appreciated. Our contact information is below.



## Implications

The recent anthology Mapping the Affective Turn in Education (Derkinos et al., 2020) serves as a springboard for our work. We see this project as contributing to the "turn" to affect that the anthology's editors and others describe (Cole, 2011; Sellar, 2015; Todd et al., 2016; Zembylas, 2021). In the shadow of a COVID world, backdropped by the disappointment of capitalism's promises and the eco-material dangers of the Anthropocene, we view this work as essential to the entanglements we will find ourselves at the multiple and varied intersections of feelings, politics, and technology.



Contact us:

Ben Ray – baray1@crimson.ua.edu  
Shelby Morris – sjmorris5@crimson.ua.edu