

Fostering a Growth Mindset and Discovering the Hidden Curriculum in Graduate Education

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Middle Georgia State University

About the Chancellor's Learning Scholars



USG Initiative – Inaugural
Cohort Formed in Fall 2018



Made up of representatives from each
institution in the University System of
Georgia (USG) who facilitate Faculty
Learning Communities (FLCs) on their
campuses.



Currently there are six FLCs led
by a CLS in operation at
Middle Georgia State



First FLC meetings held in
Spring 2019



It starts with
a conversation

About the Chancellor's Learning Scholars

FLCs are designed to give small groups of faculty (and staff) the opportunity to engage in sustained, meaningful conversations about teaching and learning with supportive colleagues from across campus.

About the Chancellor's Learning Scholars

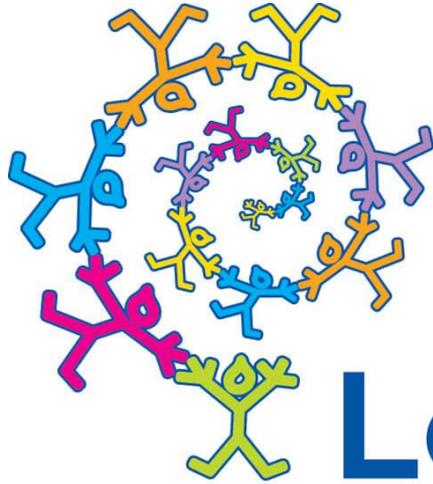
- Scholars are appointed for a two-year commitment
- Each CLS is responsible for recruiting members into their FLCs
- Members meet regularly throughout the length of the program as they explore areas of interest, hopefully leading to changes in their teaching practice.
- At the end of the program, each CLS and FLC participant should be able to point to a change or innovation they have made in their classroom or on their syllabus to an assignment, activity, or course material as a result of their participation in the FLC.





Recruitment

- Ideal participants are excited about the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations around course enrichment that lead to innovation and change in the classroom, and represent a balance of needs and expertise.
- At MGA, a call for participation was sent out from the Provost who directed those interested to contact the CLS directly
- Initial FLC topics were also identified and shared



Learning Communities

- Research shows that faculty who engage in FLCs have more confidence in their teaching, better understand how their students learn, and are more willing to try new pedagogical approaches in their classrooms.
- Participation in FLCs has also been shown to increase scholarly activity and feelings of belonging at their institution, as well as increase feelings of connectedness between students and faculty.

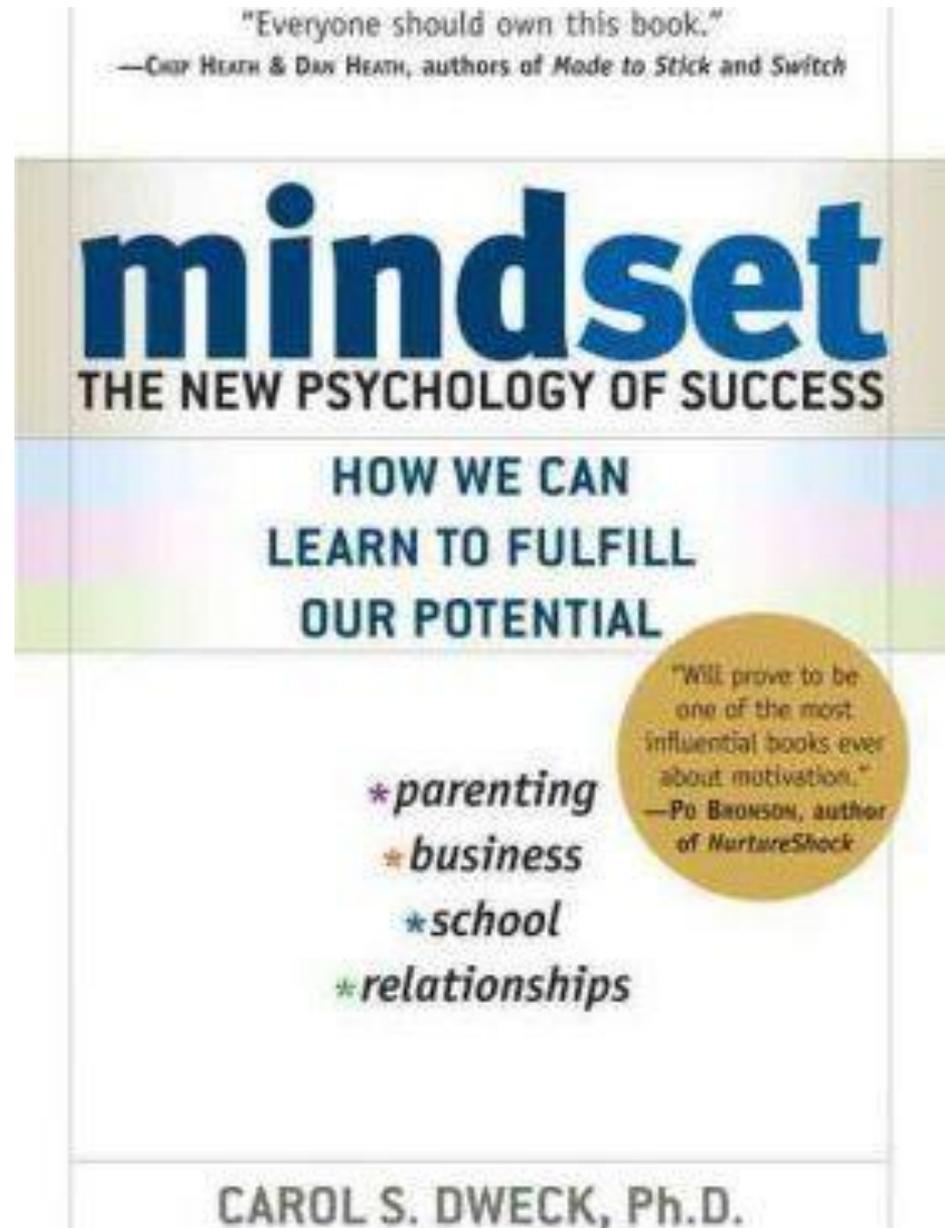
Why
FLCs?



- **Inclusive Pedagogies**
- **Small Teaching/Interactive Lectures**
- **Course Design**
- **Mindset**

Suggested
FLC Topics
from
the USG

Our Selected Topic to Kick Off the Conversations



Graduate Education

- MGA is still fairly new in offering graduate programs
- Began in 2016 with two Masters programs
- Now have five Masters programs and a graduate certificate program
- Over 200 students enrolled in graduate programs currently

Why
GRADUATE
Education?

Our Learning Community

- Made up of 8 members
- Representation from the School of Information Technology, Department of Media, Culture & the Arts, Department of English, Office of Graduate Studies, School of Education & Behavioral Sciences, and the University Libraries
- Not all faculty (nor “graduate” faculty)
- An eclectic and energetic group!





- Dr. Loretta Clayton, Director of Graduate Student Policy & Support

The discussions in our FLC centered on two main concepts we considered in relation to promoting success in graduate education—from teaching practices to providing support services:

The Growth Mindset

Based on themes from Carol S. Dweck's influential work, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (2006, 2016)

Dweck's work stems from "a tradition in psychology that shows the power of people's beliefs" (ix).

The first part of this presentation will focus on our FLC's various discussions of the growth mindset before we turn to our discussion of the hidden curriculum in graduate education.

The "Hidden Curriculum"

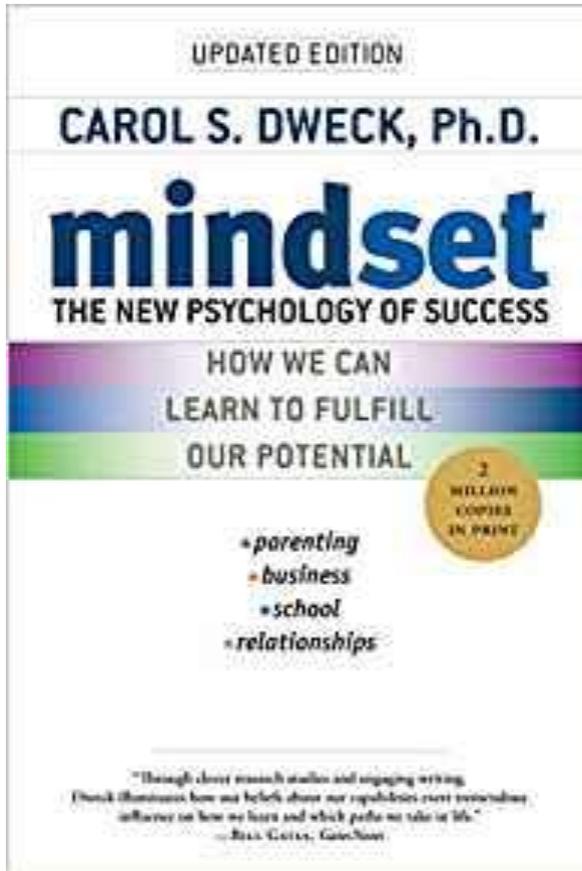
Origins of this concept/coinage of the term:

Phillip W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (1968)

Benson Snyder *The Hidden Curriculum* (1970)

Mindset by Carol S. Dweck: we all read the book!

- Are people familiar with the work?
- In what context did you read/encounter/analyze *Mindset*?



Dweck advocates adopting what she calls a **growth mindset**—not only in the context of the classroom, but in all areas of our life. (Examples from the world of sports fill the book.)

She establishes a **binary between the growth mindset and the fixed mindset.**

A person who is capable of (and eager for) learning uses a growth mindset.

A person in a fixed mindset is not capable of learning.

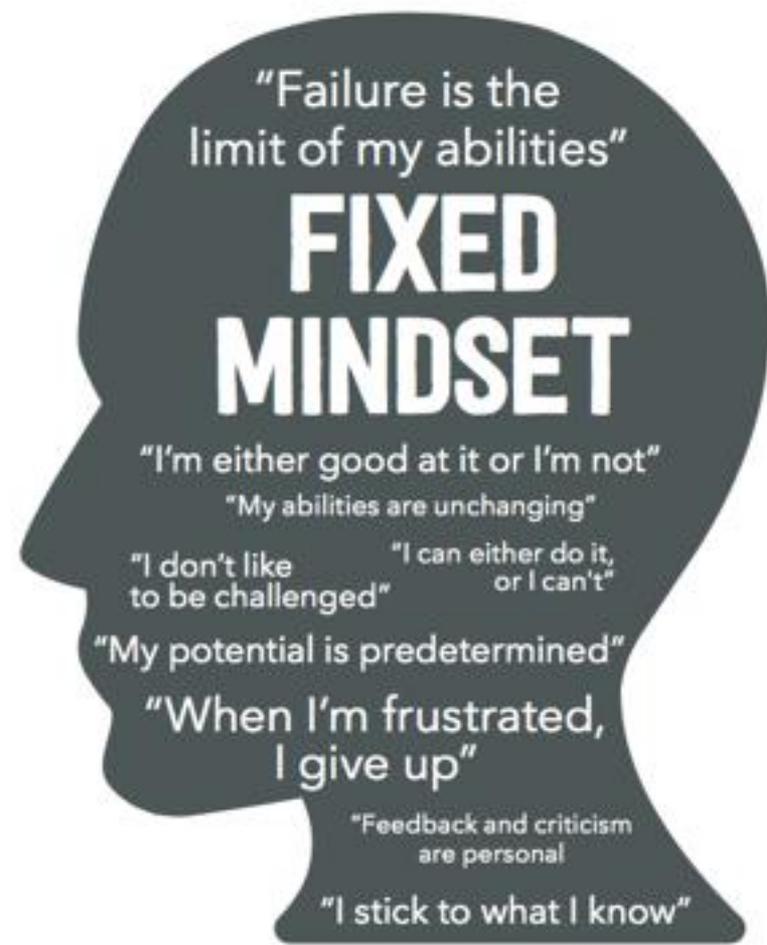
The Growth Mindset vs. the Fixed Mindset

The Growth Mindset

- **Seek to develop yourself**
- **Ability** is what matters
- You value what you do regardless of the outcome
- To learn more, you are **willing to “go back to the bottom”**
- Respond well to being corrected
- **Thrive on challenges**
- ****Failures are opportunities****
- **You feel you must prove yourself worthy**
- **Willing to try new experiences**

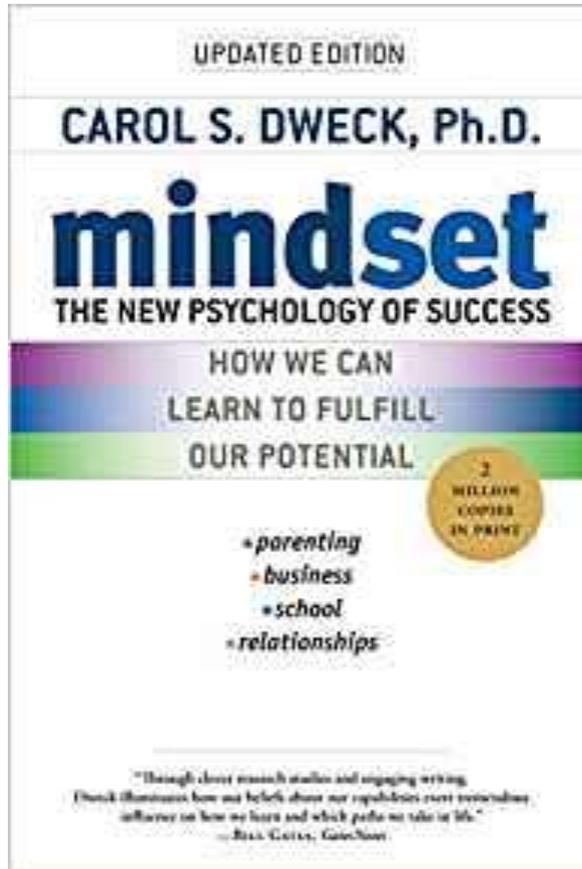
The Fixed Mindset

- **Seek to validating yourself**
- **Essential self** is what matters
- Feel you must stay “at the top” always
- **Feel you are entitled to success**
- Respond only to praise
- **Crumble when challenged**
- Aspire to appear flawless
- You lay blame
- **Preoccupied with mistakes**
- ****You let failures define you****
- **Stuck in your ways**



Complicating the “Growth Mindset” Philosophy

- Has anyone who has read *Mindset* found shortcomings to Dweck’s philosophy of learning?
- Members of our FLC pinpointed certain shortcomings in her prescriptions:



What if obstacles are structural and so deeply embedded in a system, workplace, university, etc., that adapting a growth mindset almost seems trivial?

Are we placing too much responsibility on the individual to push through *all* obstacles, and do we risk sidestepping real problems that should be addressed?

Does the growth mindset seem like an ill fit for certain personality types; if so, how do we address that problem?

Fostering the Growth Mindset – Lines of Inquiry

- How can we lead our graduate students to a growth mindset in the classroom and beyond—one that considers challenges, obstacles, and even failures as learning opportunities instead of as setbacks and failures?
- What are the ways in which graduate faculty, administrators, and staff can embrace a growth mindset to enable the highest level of pedagogy and student support and to encourage lifelong learning?
- How does personality relate to the notion of a growth mindset, and how do we embrace a growth mindset when we might fear an essential loss of personality or selfhood; how do these fears manifest for both graduate faculty and graduate students, and how do we best address and overcome them?
- To provides answers and solutions, each of us in the FLC did **deeply reflective work regarding our teaching practices and, more broadly, we each reflected on the ways we respond to student concerns and challenges**—expressed or otherwise. And we realized that our adopting a growth mindset is as important as advocating that our students adopt a growth mindset.

Fostering the Growth Mindset – Some Conclusions

- How can we lead our graduate students to a growth mindset in the classroom and beyond—one that considers challenges, obstacles, and even failures as learning opportunities instead of as setbacks and failures?
 - **Share our own failures** (particularly those during graduate study!)
 - Address that students may feel isolated (in the classroom; in the university)
 - **Create community** in innovative ways; one of the most effective ways of teaching online, for example, is to have students collaborate (“Everyone in the class is a team.”) Emphasize that **the class is a growth experience for *all* involved**
- What are the ways in which graduate faculty, administrators, and staff can embrace a growth mindset to enable the highest level of pedagogy and student support and to encourage lifelong learning?
 - **Recognize the student as a whole person**; recognize ourselves as such as well
 - Remember that every point of contact with a student is an opportunity to either shut down a person or to show that person possibilities
 - **Don’t get stuck in “same old” responses to students**; think about how **we** can grow by employing new strategies in the classroom and in all our interactions with students
 - Don’t let yourself practice a fixed mindset for yourself while advocating a growth mindset for students! (**Imposter/Entitled “genius”** – two sides, same coin?)



- Dr. Monica Miller, Assistant Professor of English

The Hidden Curriculum

A Significant Obstacle to Graduate Education Mindset

Hidden Curriculum

“What are the values, dispositions, and social and behavioral expectations of graduate school and the consequences of those expectations?” (Hatt et al.).

Focus of Hidden Curriculum

- The “unspoken value system” which appears in much of higher education.
- Under-acknowledged structures, assumptions, and value systems.
- “How to do graduate school.”
- Social and behavioral expectations.

Questions to Consider

- How do we make our processes and expectations transparent?
- Why are our graduate students here?
- What values, knowledge, and expectations are they entering with?
- What values, knowledge, and expectations are we conveying to students--whether consciously or unconsciously?

Ultimately, how
do we make
visible the
invisible?

Hidden Curriculum and Mindset

How can attention to hidden curricula support growth mindsets?

- Clarifying processes and expectations provides students with tools and “know-how.”
- Faculty mindset has a significant impact on student success (Canning et al.).
- Online and face-to-face orientation modules give students a sense of competence and confidence in their role as graduate student.

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- Hogan, Katie J. and Michelle A. Masse'. *Over Ten Million Served : Gendered Service in Language and Literature Workplaces*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010.



- Ms. Dana Casper, Graduate Studies Librarian



#The Hidden Curriculum

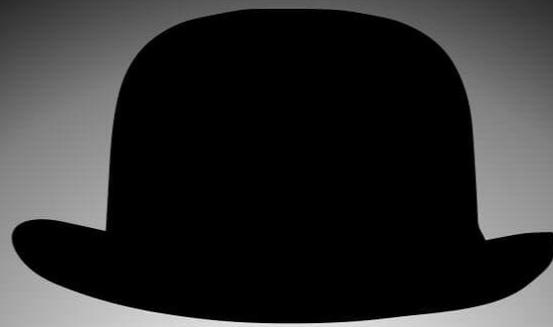
In the Library

#The Hidden Curriculum: In the Library

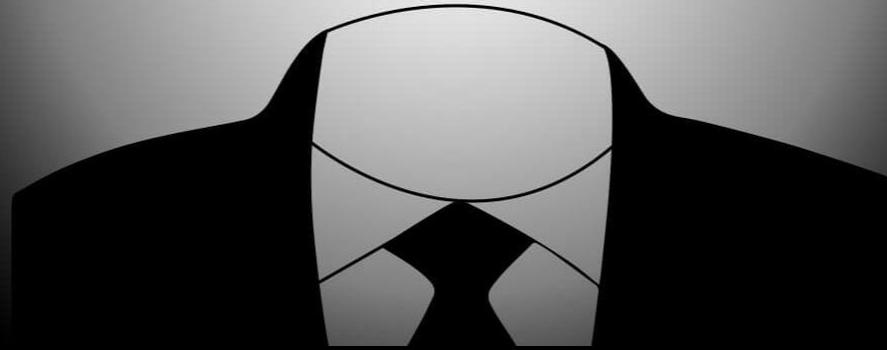
“The lessons, knowledge, and values outside the formal university curriculum in the context of graduate education.”

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<http://ezproxy.mga.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ641354&site=eds-live&scope=site>



**MAKE THE INVISIBLE
VISIBLE**



**MAKING THE INVISIBLE
VISIBLE**

How can we bring the
“hidden curriculum”
into view?

Tackling the Hidden Curriculum

- Avoid assuming that students have prior knowledge of discipline specific jargon
- Provide operational definitions of commonly used terminology
- Provide clear descriptions of assignments, and include templates and examples of great assignments for students to refer to.



James Noonan
@_jmnoonan



For the first two years of grad school, I'd sit & nod my head whenever people used the words "heuristic" & "epistemology." Students in classes I TA'd would ask me what they meant & I'd fumble, embarrassed, through an unsatisfying explanation.
[#HiddenCurriculum](#)

Jess Calarco @JessicaCalarco

See also: heuristic; dialectic; stochastic; pedagogy, etc. All words I pretended to know during my first year of grad school, and none of which were on the GREs. #HigherEd has a #hiddencurriculum, and language is a big part of it. twitter.com/PhDeepthoughts...

♥ 21 2:53 PM - Jul 22, 2018



[See James Noonan's other Tweets](#)





Jess Calarco

@JessicaCalarco

Follow

Early in grad school, I had a couple assignments that asked for literature reviews. Apparently, that doesn't mean describe all the research on a given topic. And it doesn't mean 34 pages double-spaced.

1:46 PM - 21 Jul 2018

10 Retweets 167 Likes



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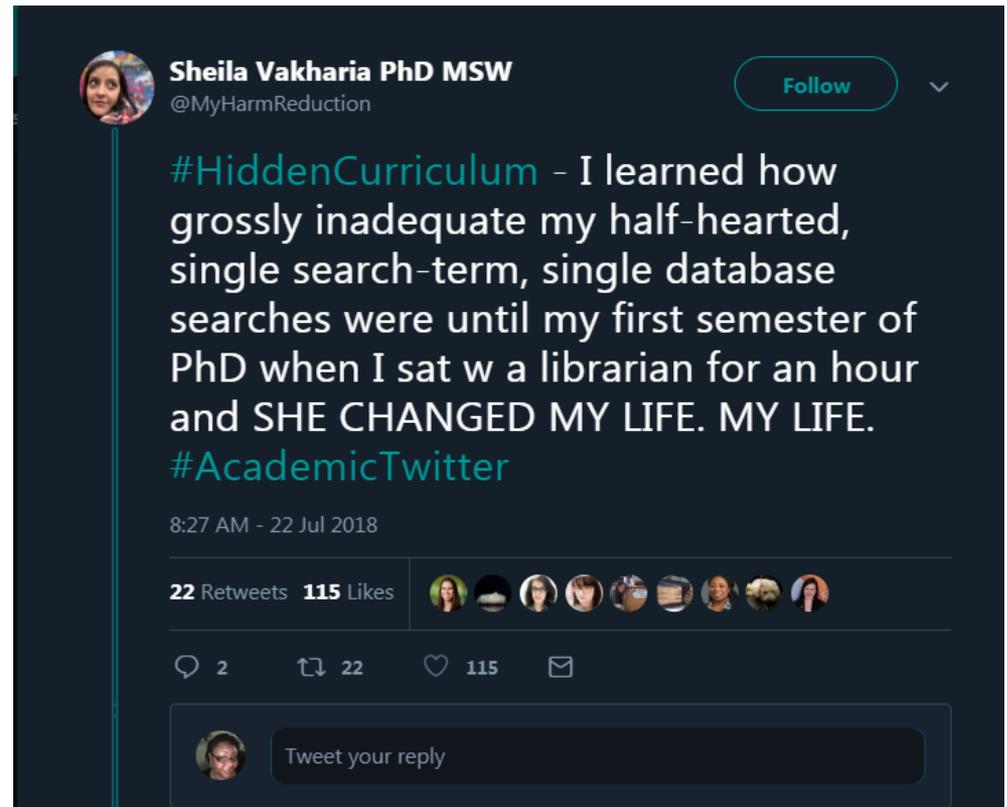
Tweet your reply

Library Support for Graduate Students

- Citation management assistance and training
- Research strategy workshops
- Workshops on academic publishing
- Assistance working with technologies (wikis, websites, blogs) as part of digital projects

Structured Research Support

- Individual research consultations either in person, or online
- Research tutorials with video to illustrate search techniques
- Provide curated lists of subject specific resources
- Collaboration with faculty to design course specific support materials



Works cited

- Anderson, T. (2001). The Hidden Curriculum in Distance Education: an updated view. *Change*, 33(6), 28–35. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.mga.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ641354&site=eds-live&scope=site>
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Questions?