

#HeartWork

Laura Isbell, Ph.D.

Texas A&M University-Commerce

The 2022 CSOTTE conference was the year of Heart work. As I reflect on the conference, I am proud to say that I am an educator and that I am in a profession of heart work. At the conference, I was able to learn about innovative practices, collaborate on projects with colleagues, and network professionally. I am reminded that CSOTTE is such a wonderful event and organization for current and upcoming educator passionate and appreciative educators are for one another. It was so moving to observe how we uplift and support our colleagues without fail, and I truly believe this practice is an extension of how we as educators feel about one another and our students.

The question I asked at the very beginning of the conference, *Why Teach?*, was one that I wanted everyone to consider, reflect, and remember as they went through the remainder of the conference. With this question in mind, I was able to observe the collaboration, enthusiasm, and compassion for teaching in the sessions, at the sponsored tables, at the networking events, and even during the first, Casino Night. Such a memorable night!

One of the proudest moments, for me, at the conference was to observe my former student as the keynote speaker. He truly shined in this moment, and I am so very proud of all of his dedication, hard work, and perseverance to become the educator that he set out to be so long ago. Not only did I see his heart work for education, but I witnessed a ballroom full of educators who were touched

by his heart work and commitment to teaching. His message, *BelieVe*, reminded us of the lengths educators take to achieve their dreams to impact the lives of others.

Project Give Back was truly a memorable and touching part of the conference. Not only did we exceed the amount projected to donate, we also had the honor to present the donation to a most deserving school principal. To be able to see how this donation would impact one school reminded me of the HeartWork we continue to each day in education. It was such a joyful and touching moment to watch the recipients for the project give back. I am reminded of the daily opportunities we as educators have to impact the lives of our students, colleagues, and profession.

Personally, I know the work I do every day for my students makes a difference, sparks curiosity, and encourages best teaching practices. If we can simply take a moment to stop and remember, *Why teach? Why did we choose this profession?* It may spark that the joy, compassion, and appreciation for education. The phrase, HeartWork, is a message I hope we can continue to include in our current teaching practices and educational profession. I conclude this editorial note with a special note of appreciation and gratitude to my fellow educators who continue to put in the HeartWork each day to impact, change, and touch the lives of their students. Teaching truly is a work of “heart” and I am so honored to work with all of you on this educational journey.