

Where Can UVic English Take You? An Interview with Kate Fry

What is your job?

[*Growing Up Trans*](#) is an anthology based on the [Gender Generations Project](#) (formerly the Trans Tipping Point project). The project aimed to provide trans youth resources and support for fields they may be interested in. We hire adult trans folks who are already established in their respective fields to run workshops for these youth. Each year is themed around a different profession. The first year the project ran—2017—our field of focus was on writing. During that first year of the project, I acted as its Project Coordinator primarily responsible for securing funding and event planning.



Kate Fry

Growing Up Trans is an anthology of work by trans youth that was written during this first year of the program. Alongside educational scholar Dr Lindsay Herriot, I acted as the book’s co-editor. However, I like to stress that our role with the book was a bit unorthodox from what you might expect from editors. Both Dr. Herriot and myself are cisgender adult women; thus, doing something more like traditional editing work to the youth’s stories would be antithetical to the project’s whole ethos. Our editorial work was more organizational. We aimed to do the annoying “dirty work” involved in getting a book published so that the youth would be freed up to focus on the more creative aspects of the project.

What led you to pursue an interest in publishing educational material?

To be honest with you, I ended up publishing educational material more by happenstance than intention. My original interest in the project came from a literary desire: I was interested in the ways in which queer youth told stories about themselves, and how those stories might compare to narrative told about them in mass media (which, especially back in 2017, were often stories curated by heterosexual/cisgender adults).

The educational direction the project would eventually take was more the result of my colleague Lindsay Herriot. I’m glad to have had this experience with the project and with the field of education in general, but I don’t imagine I will continue publishing educational material.

What does a typical professional day look like for you?

Since the publication of *Growing Up Trans*, the book has actually had fairly little to do with my day-to-day. Currently, I am completing a master’s degree in Literature at the University of Glasgow. Glasgow has a program specializing in Fantasy Literature, which is my area of study.

My daily routine won't look too dissimilar to anyone else's in academia: I attend classes, write papers, and I read *a lot* of books.

What's your favourite part of your work?

My favourite part of the work I did for *Growing Up Trans* was definitely the trans youth I got to work with. All of them are really incredible kids and it's been a privilege to hear their stories. The project's been going on for over 5 years now, so I've also gotten to watch a lot of them grow up too and I'm really proud of them. I was only 19 myself when I started working with the project, so not a lot older than some of the youth. Since I vacated my position of Project Coordinator, that role has been exclusively filled by youth who were previously participants in the project.

How did UVic English help prepare you for this work?

Like I mentioned before, my original interest in the project came from a desire to examine queer narratives and how the authors of those stories change those narratives. While ultimately that initial idea is very different from what the project and book would eventually become, I do think that my interest in the project came in part out of my studies and my love of stories.

On a practical level, my degree did a great job preparing me for the actual writing components involved in getting a book like this published. While Dr. Herriot and I tried to leave as little of a mark as possible on the book, we did still need to write the introduction, key concepts, discussion questions, and so forth. The basics of writing children's non-fiction are not as different from writing an academic essay as you might think. Over the course of working on the book, I found myself frequently thinking back to basic essay writing advice I'd been given by Dr. Mary Elizabeth Leighton in ENGL 310. The jargon may change, but the basics of how to communicate clearly do not.