LOS ANGELES TEACHER CHALLENGES HER STUDENTS & THE NATION TO TAKE THE gramMARCH CHALLENGE

gramMARCH Launches March 1, 2016, and Asks you to Pause. Ponder. Prose.

LOS ANGELES, CA – First impressions last forever.

In our modern world of virtual social circles that revolve around streaming digital scrolls, what does your writing say about you?

Los Angeles teacher, Heather Shotke, challenges students and adults alike to “makeover” their prose by taking The gramMARCH Challenge and embracing intelligent communication.

The gramMARCH Challenge, which launches on March 1, 2016, and lasts throughout the month, asks everyone to write in proper grammar, full sentences and use entire words in text messaging, formal writing and all forms of written communications.

Technology allows people to text, tweet, Kik, Skype, Vine, SnapChat, Facebook, and e-mail. With all these forms of rapid and constant communication, shorthand text-speak, slang and abbreviations have become the unapproved norm in the classroom and the boardroom, blurring the lines between formal and informal communication.

Shotke, founder of gramMARCH and a graduate of the Annenberg School for Communication at USC, has seen these abbreviated forms of language migrate from the screens of smartphones to the pages of her students’ assignments with an alarming increase. The veteran teacher is concerned society has become too acceptant of this new-era shorthand. Students are not the only ones at fault. Adults too have adopted this lax method of prose.

“People don’t seem to give their ‘text-slang’ or abbreviations a second thought,” Shotke said. “But the reality is, their writing is often a first impression on employers, college admission counselors, supervisors or potential ‘friends’, both real and virtual.”

This shorthand language became increasingly popular with the advent of social media, especially in applications that limit characters and essentially force words to be shortened. Research shows that 91% of mobile internet access is for social activities with 73% of smartphone users accessing social networks at least once a day.

Shotke believes if students were to use proper grammar in these communications, it would be a productive way to practice comprehensive and thoughtful communication and bolster an affinity for writing – a skill that could be transferred to academic assignments. Through gramMARCH, Shotke is...
challenging the nation to slow down and think about what they are writing, so that thoughts and words are concise and given respect.

“Anecdotally, it takes about 30 days for something to become a habit,” Shotke said. “So, if we can get people to accept The gramMARCH Challenge and write with proper grammar in all communications – including texts, tweets, Kiks, Instagram captions and status updates on Facebook – for the month of March, we may be able to make the shift back to intelligent communication.”

For more information and to accept the gramMARCH Challenge for the month of March 2016, log on to www.gramMARCH.org. Follow the gramMARCH movement on Twitter and Instagram @gramMARCH, and Facebook at The GramMARCH Challenge.

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