
FROM THE EDITOR: JOIN THE PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATION

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Abstract

Kansas English Editor-in-Chief Katie Cramer encourages readers to notice how authors of the 2024 issue of *Kansas English* elevate urgent issues in teaching and literacy, and consider how they, too, can join the professional conversation.

Keywords: professional dialogue, inquiry, teacher-scholars, writing for publication, KATE

Did you know that writing for publication enhances teacher learning, classroom practice, reflection, and inquiry (Rathert & Okan, 2015)? Did you also know that you can publish your scholarly and creative work in *two* different venues hosted by the [Kansas Association of Teachers of English \(KATE\)](#)? [KATE Pages](#) is KATE's official blog, and it publishes a variety of pieces throughout the year on KATE's award-winning website. [Kansas English](#) is KATE's award-winning peer-reviewed journal that invites scholarly and creative work of interest to English and literacy educators at all levels. Not all [National Council of Teachers of English \(NCTE\)](#) state affiliates provide these publishing opportunities for their members and beyond. I am proud that KATE does.

In fact, as editor-in-chief of *Kansas English*, I delight in the ways that authors in this and every issue initiate and continue dialogues about topics that are important to English and literacy teachers at all levels. Although the authors of different manuscripts for the 2024 issue of *Kansas English* did not collaborate with one another, their work seems to be in conversation. For example, **Stephanie Robinson** reflects on the value of writing instruction in the age of generative artificial intelligence (GAI), while **Carrie Dickison**, **Haven Massey**, and **Beth Gulley** offer perspectives and applications for effective writing instruction that resists the narrative that GAI will replace human-generated compositions. Similarly, **Ambyr Rios** shares research that reveals a continued dearth of diverse texts in Kansas high school English classrooms, while **Carolyn L. Carlson** offers strategies for resisting censorship challenges (which tend to target diverse books and authors); **Kevin B. Kienholz** introduces us to middle grades author [Janae Marks](#), whose books and short stories feature protagonists of Color; and **Haven Massey** reviews the award-winning YA novel *We Deserve Monuments* by [Jas Hammonds](#), who writes about queer characters, identifies as a mixed-race Black and white person, and uses she/they pronouns.

I hope you will take time this summer to read and learn from these pieces and consider how you might join the conversation by ...

- Submitting your work to [KATE PAGES](#), edited by Caleb K. Thornton,
- Submitting a breakout proposal to the [KATE Conference](#), and

- Submitting your scholarly and creative work to [Kansas English](#).

Think about how you can be in dialogue with the pieces in this issue (or previous issues) of [Kansas English](#) by talking/writing back to them, citing them in your work, and bringing your informed perspective and ideas to the ongoing professional conversation.

For example, notice how **Aaron Rife**'s 2019 reflective essay "[Missing the Signs: Imperfect Allyship and the Re-examination of Personal Biases](#)" builds on, responds to, and cites **Jenni Bader**'s 2017 reflective essay "[Supporting Students and Their Emerging Sense of Self](#)." How might you compose in response to the work you find in the digital pages of [Kansas English](#)? Try reading with the intent to both learn *and* build on the ideas and perspectives you encounter in this issue's pieces, which I briefly describe below:

In "Perspectives from the President," **KATE President Nathan G. Whitman** shares his hopeful and encouraging take on the 2023-2024 academic year in Kansas.

In her practitioner piece "These Books Matter: A Banned Books Week Celebration," **Carolyn L. Carlson** describes a university event designed to deepen attendees' understanding of commonly challenged/banned books, as well as how to resist censorship. (Notice how Carlson's piece is in conversation with **Jessica Marston**'s 2023 *Kansas English* scholarly article "['Pleasure to Burn': A Comprehensive Look into the History of Censoring Literature in School Environments](#).")

Stephanie Robinson explores the transformative power and absolute necessity of writing instruction that aids in self-discovery and deepens students' understanding of a complex world in her reflective essay "Why the Need for Writing Instruction Still Persists in the Age of Generative AI: A Professional and Personal Reflection."

In her reflective essay, "Putting Together the Pieces of Effective Instruction: The Role of Structured Literacy," **Carrie B. Tholstrup** compares the qualities of effective structured literacy instruction to the qualities of jigsaw puzzle assembly, noting that both involve sequential, cumulative instruction; varying levels of explicit instruction; and assessment.

Haven Massey explores her own evolving writing process and how it impacts her instructional practice in her reflective essay "Do as I Say *and* as I Do: Creating Strong Writers by Emphasizing and Modeling the Process."

In her scholarly article "The Kansas Literary Canon: A Study of Texts Taught in High School English Courses," **Amy Rios** shares her research on recent high school graduates' reports of the most commonly taught texts in Kansas high school English classes, revealing a continued lack of diversity in texts and authors.

In his interview with author Janae Marks, the featured writer at the 2023 Heartland Literature Festival at Washburn University, **Kevin B. Kienholz** highlights Marks' emphasis on patience and persistence in the life of a writer, as well as her invitation to young readers to experience a range of genres and topics to build their reading lives.

Dave Malone invites us to pause, savor, and be in awe of everyday moments in his three poems: "Driving through the Night to Get Home," "First Snow at the Body Shop," and "Bucket Calf."

The Teaching Tips column brings us pedagogical strategies that we can immediately integrate into our curriculum designs. Column authors for this issue include **Carrie Dickison**, **LuAnn Fox**, **Beth Gulley**, and **Rebecca Kastendick**.

A children's book review by **Michelle Anderson**, **Baylee Reyes**, and **Mattelyn Swartz** and young adult book reviews by **Haven Massey**, **Madilyn Kramer**, **Danika Pester**, and **John Franklin** provide us with recently published books to add to our to-read list and (classroom) libraries.

Again, think about how you can be in conversation with the ideas shared by your peers in this and [previous issues of Kansas English](#). Think about the topics addressed by authors in this issue (structured literacy, generative AI, book bans and challenges, the continued homogeneity of Kansas' literary canon, innovative teaching tips, and new authors and books to include in your curriculum), and ask yourself:

- What ideas and issues would you like to respond to?
- What new ideas do you want to bring to the discussion?

Start drafting. Open your writer's notebook, journal, or device, and get your ideas down (see Haven Massey's reflective essay in this issue for inspiration!). We'd love to learn from your insights and perspective in [KATE PAGES](#), an upcoming issue of [Kansas English](#), and/or at a breakout session at a future [KATE Conference](#). Join the professional dialogue; we need your voice.

Before I sign off, I have an exciting update about *Kansas English*. With support from the KATE Executive Board, Journal Manager Dr. Susan J. Matveyeva is leading efforts to assign a [digital object identifier \(DOI\)](#) to the journal itself and to individual pieces in each issue, including all manuscripts published since 2017 when *Kansas English* became freely available online in [Wichita State University's Open Journal Systems](#). The DOI will serve as a persistent identifier and persistent link on the internet, so that *Kansas English* manuscripts can be accessed reliably, regardless of where they are stored. Since [APA Style and MLA Style both urge authors to include DOIs](#), when available, for each source in their references list or works cited, it's exciting that *Kansas English* now offers this service to its authors and readers. In fact, Dr. Matveyeva and her team have already added DOIs to [all Kansas English manuscripts currently available online](#) (2017-2023). Previous *KE* authors can locate their work and include the DOI in their references to their publications (e.g., in resumes and curriculum vitae). Thanks to Dr. Matveyeva and her team for continuing to strengthen and extend *Kansas English's* online presence and accessibility, so that readers all over the world can benefit from the wisdom and experiences shared by *KE* authors.

Reference

Rathert, S., & Okan, Z. (2015). Writing for publication as a tool in teacher development. *ELT Journal*, 69(4), 363-372. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccv029>

Author Biography

Katherine (Katie) Mason Cramer, Ph.D. (she/her) is starting her 15th year as Program Chair and Professor of English Education in Wichita State University's School of Education. Prior to earning her doctorate, Katie was a middle school English teacher in Kansas City, Kansas, Public Schools, and she has maintained her Kansas teaching licenses (ELA 5-9 and 7-12) so that a joyful return to the middle or high school ELA classroom is always possible. She has been a member of KATE and on the Executive Board since moving back to Kansas (from Arizona and Georgia) in 2010, and she has served as Editor of *Kansas English* since 2017. Under her leadership, *Kansas English* has been honored with NCTE's Affiliate Journal of Excellence Award in 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023. Katie's research and publications center the use of young adult literature to recognize, affirm, and teach diverse genders and sexualities in ELA classrooms and curricula. She can be reached at Katie.Cramer@wichita.edu.