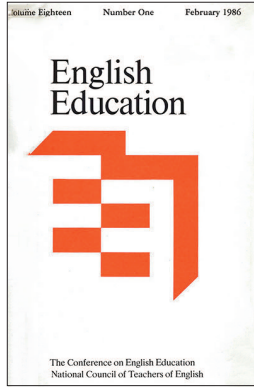


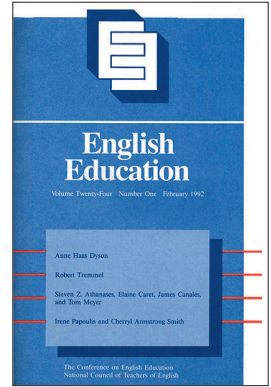
# Fifty Years of *English Education*: A Gallery of Covers



1969–1978  
Editors: Oscar Haugh;  
Ben F. Nelms



1979–1986  
Editor: Allen Berger



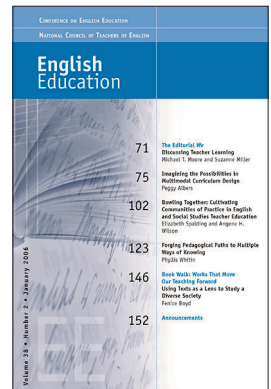
1986–1993  
Editors: Mary K. Healy  
and Gordon Pradl



1994–2000  
Editors: Patricia Lambert Stock;  
David Schaafsma and Ruth Vinz



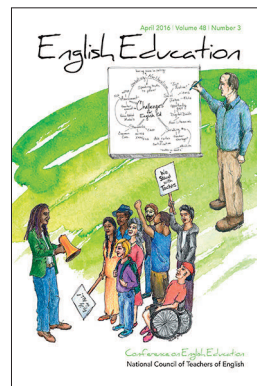
2001–2005  
Editors: Cathy Fleischer  
and Dana L. Fox



2005–2010  
Editor: Michael Moore



2010–2015  
Editors: Leslie S. Rush  
and Lisa Scherff



2015–2020  
Editors: sj Miller and  
Tara Star Johnson

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## Editorial: Karen Morris with the 2019 Editorial Team

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### Fifty Years of *English Education*: What the Emig Award-Winning Articles Tell Us

**I**n the April 2019 issue of *English Education*, we—that is, the editorial team—engaged with former editors to write a celebratory editorial in recognition of the journal’s 50th anniversary. This editorial follows in the same vein but with a focus on Emig Award recipients. Inaugurated in 2000, the ELATE Janet Emig Award is given for exemplary scholarship published in *English Education* in the previous calendar year. A subcommittee of the CEE/ELATE Executive Committee selects the recipient, and the article is featured in a special session at the NCTE Annual Convention. The award is given in honor of Janet Emig, professor emeritus at Rutgers University, for her contribution to the field of English education. Table 1 shows all of the recipients: 22 articles and 58 authors.

Though the annual awards didn’t begin until 2000, three decadal awards were given retrospectively for the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Thus, we thought a closer examination of the award winners might reveal insights and historical perspectives about the field of English education as a whole and what “exemplary scholarship” looks like in particular. To that end, we invited doctoral students Karen Morris (Penn State) and Sarah Fleming (Syracuse) to conduct a content analysis of the 22 articles. Their analysis resulted in the distilled summary that appears in bulleted form later in the editorial; more on this process later. Next, we asked interested Emig Award recipients to write a 200ish-word commentary on the distilled summary. The author(s) from seven winning articles generously agreed to contribute; their responses are included in the second half of this editorial. Our collaboration with Karen during the writing of this editorial generated deep discussion and collegial camaraderie in the hybrid electronic workspace of our team meetings. We hope the fruit of our labor does the same for you and yours.

<b>Table 1. ELATE Janet Emig Award Recipients</b>		
<b>Year Awarded</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Title of Article</b>
2018	Danny C. Martinez	Imagining a Language of Solidarity for Black and Latinx Youth in English Language Arts Classrooms
2017	Detra Price-Dennis	Developing Curriculum to Support Black Girls' Literacies in Digital Spaces
2016	Gholnecar E. Muhammad	"Inducing Colored Sisters of Other Places to Imitate Their Example": Connecting Historic Literary Societies to a Contemporary Writing Group
2015	Denise N. Morgan Kristine E. Pytash	Preparing Preservice Teachers to Become Teachers of Writing: A 20-Year Review of the Research Literature
2014	Marcelle Haddix Detra Price-Dennis	Urban Fiction and Multicultural Literature as Transformative Tools for Preparing English Teachers for Diverse Classrooms
2013	Janet D. Johnson	"A Rainforest in Front of a Bulldozer": The Literacy Practices of Teacher Candidates Committed to Social Justice
2012	Brian White	The Vulnerable Population of Teacher-Researchers; Or, "Why I Can't Name My Coauthors"
2011	Glynda A. Hull Amy Stornaiuolo Urvashi Sahni	Cultural Citizenship and Cosmopolitan Practice: Global Youth Communicate Online
2010	Robert P. Yagelski	A Thousand Writers Writing: Seeking Change through the Radical Practice of Writing as a Way of Being
2010 Honorable Mention	Nancy M. Bailey	"It Makes It More Real": Teaching New Literacies in a Secondary English Classroom
2009	Anne Whitney Sheridan Blau Alison Bright Rosemary Cabe Tim Dewar Jason Levin Roseanne Macias Paul Rogers	Beyond Strategies: Teacher Practice, Writing Process, and the Influence of Inquiry
2008	Suzanne M. Miller	English Teacher Learning for New Times: Digital Video Composing as Multimodal Literacy Practice
2007	Robert A. Tremmel	Changing the Way We Think in English Education: A Conversation in the Universal Barbershop
2006	Anne Haas Dyson	Crafting "The Humble Prose of Living": Rethinking Oral/Written Relations in the Echoes of Spoken Word
2005	Susan V. Wall	Writing the "Self" in Teacher Research: The Potential Powers of a New Professional Discourse
2004	Emily R. Smith Kevin G. Basmadjian Leah Kirell Stephen M. Koziol, Jr.	On Learning to Teach English Teachers: A Textured Portrait of Mentoring
2003	Peter Smagorinsky Andrea Lakly Tara Star Johnson	Acquiescence, Accommodation, and Resistance in Learning to Teach within a Prescribed Curriculum
2002	No award given	

*continued on next page*

**Table 1.** Continued

2001	Patricia Lambert Stock	Toward a Theory of Genre in Teacher Research: Contributions from a Reflective Practitioner
2000	Robert Tremmel	Still Loading Pig Iron after All These Years: Tribalism and English Education in the Global Contact Zone
1990–99	Anne Haas Dyson	What Difference Does Difference Make? Teacher Perspectives on Diversity, Literacy, and the Urban Primary School
1980–89	Maxine Greene	Toward Possibility: Expanding the Range of Literacy
1969–79	Robert C. Small	Student Authority

### From Karen

As an aspiring English teacher educator, reading and organizing these winning articles afforded me the opportunity to see a broad range of the scholarship most valued in the field of English teacher education. I began by reading the first 12 winning articles, noting key topics in educational research, interesting quotes, main arguments, and the names of theorists I recognized. I then reviewed my notes with Sarah, who had read the other 10. Without planning to, we both approached the content analysis in similar ways, specifically by noting key topic(s) present in each article. When we compared our initial findings, the topics we had identified overlapped. We were then able to sort the articles by the categories listed below.

After agreeing on the key content of the articles, we started to look at the articles from other angles: Which theorists were cited most frequently, and how did they change over time? How many people won more than once? What might we be able to say about the demographics of the authors and their institutions? What genres of writing were most prevalent?

In short, what I learned is that some ideas, such as how awareness of literacy’s expanding definition can affect student learning, have been discussed since the 1980s. Defining English language arts (ELA) and how one teaches it is another strand that spans the decades. Another comprehensive category was the preparation of teacher candidates to teach students in an ever-changing world. Also addressed are the challenges of hearing the voices of teachers and all they can share from their classroom research. And finally, in the most recent articles, no matter the central topic, the authors focused explicitly on issues connected to equity and social justice.

With new learning, new questions arise for me. Where is the field headed? Will the focus shift from discussion about the content of ELA to the role ELA can play in students’ lives? How can we take ideas that have been revisited since the 1970s and see them manifest in the classroom? As

I enter the field, the question that speaks the most to me is, *What work is being done to create strong teacher educators?* This topic was addressed in only one winner, and yet it is central to our field.

I hope to say more about these writings once I am free of the constraints of this editorial space.<sup>1</sup> Existential questions can be explored as well as pragmatic concerns: *What does this all mean? What topics do we need to focus on to help students, inservice teachers, preservice teachers, and teacher educators?* No matter the topic or genre, the 22 pieces demonstrate the need to question the status quo or assumptions about teaching or student learning. A final joy I wish to mention about reading these articles is that so much content can be transferred to subjects beyond English language arts education. Since reading these articles, I often say to colleagues in different subject areas, “Oh, you should read this article. It’s just what you’re talking about!”

## Distilled Summary of the Content Analysis

- › The articles’ **main themes** in order of their frequency (sometimes articles were listed in more than one category; all articles are listed at least once):
  1. Expanding notion of literacies (11)
  2. Teacher and participant researchers (6)
  3. Critical literacies and social justice (6)
  4. Theory/practice negotiations (5)
  5. Cyclical nature of pedagogical change (4)
  6. Becoming teacher educators (1)
- › **On genre:** A trend toward empirical pieces mirrors former editors’ observation for the April 2019 editorial about the turn from narrative to social science submissions. Not quite half are clearly research studies, though all but one mixed methods piece are qualitative in design; a few are “research lite” in that data are used/reflected on but not central to the piece; one is a literature review; and eight are essays.
- › **On placement:** When we looked at where the winning article appeared in its issue, we found that the article was first (following an editorial) 36 percent of the time.
- › **On authors’ professional status:** Of the 22 pieces, 16 were single-authored and 6 were co- or multiauthored. Of first authors at the

time of publication, 7 were professors; 8 were associate professors; 6 were assistant professors; and 1 was a doctoral student. When we consider second authors, we pick up 3 additional assistant professors, 2 doctoral students, and a high school teacher. The three scholars who won it twice—Detra Price-Dennis, Robert Tremmel, and Anne Haas Dyson—were assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, respectively.

- › **On demographics:** Of all ( $N = 38$ ) authors, there are about twice as many women as men; about one-fifth of the recipients are people of color.
- › **On institutions:** See the U.S. map in Figure 1 of where first authors were located at the time of publication. Three institutions were represented by more than one winning article: Iowa State, Michigan State, and Teachers College. Of the 22 winning articles, 18 of the first authors were at Research 1 institutions.<sup>2</sup>
- › **On theoretical orientation:** When we looked at whom the authors were citing, we noticed a shift from what we'd broadly categorize as constructivists (Dewey, Vygotsky, and Bakhtin most referenced in early recipients) to an admixture of critical theorists (Freire, Ladson-Billings, Smitherman, Cochran-Smith and Lytle, Gee, Heath, Street, and Tatum appear frequently). Four out of the five most recent winners contain an explicit social justice orientation.



**Figure 1.** Geographical location of ELATE Janet Emig Award recipients' institutions

## From the Emig Award Recipients

The paragraphs below are contributions from Emig Award recipients who agreed to respond to the distilled summary, organized in chronological order of the year of their award, including the first (Tremmel) and most recent (Martinez) annual award winners. We include them in their entirety.

### Robert Tremmel, Iowa State University (2000, 2007)

My initial reaction to Tara's plan for this content analysis was personal. At long last, I hoped, I might be able to answer an existential question that has been bothering me for many years: What the hell was I doing—or trying to do—in the articles I wrote for *English Education*? I always figured there must be some explanation, or at least some excuse, for my writing, and I hoped that this content analysis might provide me with some clues.

However, setting that aside for now, I do want to comment on the map showing the geographical distribution of the Emig Award winners. By my count, of the 22 institutions represented by the light gray and dark gray symbols on the map, all but five are located considerably to the east of the Mississippi River. This makes me wonder.

Why is there such a noticeable geographical imbalance? Is it simply because there are more people and Research 1 universities in the east, and so more people writing, that it becomes more likely award winners will come from there? Does the membership of ELATE skew toward the east and urban areas? Is this a problem, and if it is, is there any way to fix it? And what about other annual ELATE awards? Do the winners of those reflect a similarly uneven distribution?

I am certainly not suggesting that there is any institutional or regional bias in ELATE awards processes. I've been involved in those processes and I never noticed anything of the sort. But it does seem to be a fact that for some reason or other there are underrepresented regions and institutions—and perhaps writers. What's that reason?

### Peter Smagorinsky, The University of Georgia (2003)

I have had a lot of experience with awards over the last three decades. I've written a lot of nomination letters, and I've been nominated a few times as well. I've been a member of many national and university award committees and chaired several of them. One thing that seems clear to me is that the process of producing a winner is a matter of social construction. The "best article" or "best whatever" is determined by a very human process, one that

inevitably follows from the entering biases and beliefs of the people selected to serve on the committee. Committee selection, then, seems to be a factor in who gets that wall plaque at the end of the process. Often, a committee is selected by someone, and the membership tends to reflect the values of the person forming the group. Award recognition, then, begins with who gets to decide who gets to decide the winner. The deck may well be stacked from before the committee ever meets.

On committees, people tend to include predictable types of members. Some set aside all of their biases and make an effort to pick the best candidate, irrespective of paradigm, demographics, topics, etc. OK, just kidding. That never happens.

Rather, people advocate for someone more or less like themselves. In some cases, it's a "friends and family" orientation: People vote for their buddies or people from their social or intellectual group. In some cases they support a person whose work is similar to their own, provided that person is not a rival or bad citizen (although the bad citizenship requirement may be waived if the person is a good enough friend). These affiliative means may be paradigmatic, topical, site-based, or other type of overlap. See, for instance, how a number-cruncher fares in a competition decided by people with a qualitative orientation.

Awards are a function of who is on the committee, and thus who appoints the committee. But then, so are job searches, the external review process, and other means of making high-stakes decisions in our profession. The social construction of awards therefore ought to serve as a microcosm of how the business works, and perhaps merits attention in the sort of investigation undertaken in this editorial.

### **Leah Kirell and Emily Smith, Michigan State University<sup>3</sup> (2004)**

As we respond, we think it important to note that this small sampling of articles and authors may not fully reflect the broad trends or valuable individual contributions in English education. Nevertheless, we offer the following observations and hope they can be useful to readers and editors.

We are gratified to see that past winners include a wide range of writers in various stages of their careers. Doctoral students, assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, and classroom teachers (though only one) are represented. We think this variety strengthens the knowledge and practice in the field and hope *English Education* will continue to honor the work of K-12 instructors as well as contributions from novice researchers and faculty.



The award winners clearly reflect our field's current commitment to social justice and critical literacies. Many of these pieces discuss the importance of acknowledging and supporting every child's literacy practices, which should remain at the forefront of our work. We also note that the majority of the award-winning articles are empirical and were completed at Research 1 institutions. Furthermore, only one article (our own) addresses the preparation of teacher educators. We were surprised by this.

At a time when national discourse denigrates public schools, policies prioritize standardization over sound pedagogy, and political agendas starve schools and students of vital resources, we think it is time to expand our commitment to social justice by more deliberately seeking out the voices of classroom teachers and teacher educators. These two groups must daily navigate the increasingly wide chasm between best practices and political expediency. Hearing these voices via a variety of methodologies is imperative if we are to improve teaching and learning. The expertise and commitment codified in these Emig Award winners assures us that *English Education* will be instrumental in our shared efforts to reclaim control of our profession. We look forward to the next 22 years.

### **Anne Whitney, Penn State University (2009)**

Our 2009 Emig Award article showed how inquiry-oriented, sustained, and meaningful professional development for teachers of writing made a difference. In short, it matters that teachers be invited to and supported in thinking critically about what they are doing and why, about the purposes and motives behind the materials they are asked to use, and about the real needs of the real learners with whom they are in relationship from day to day.

Seeing the themes in the content analysis, along with all the award-winning articles lined up together, makes me proud of our field. Especially precious to my heart are (a) our increasing awareness of the complexity of teaching and learning among humans who are diverse in race, ethnicities, genders, orientations, languages, histories, and abilities, evident in both the content and the authorship of articles; and (b) the growth of empirical inquiry alongside our continued embrace of reflective and interpretive scholarship.

Yet it also reveals how far we've still to go. In 2009, my coauthors and I were writing in a context of the deprofessionalization of teaching. That trend has continued into 2019. In 2009 we were writing in the context of persistent inequities in the educational opportunities available to students, especially students of color and those of diverse language backgrounds. That trend has

continued into 2019. While research in our field has come a long way, there is much yet to do in the world our research describes and seeks to influence.

### **Kristine Pytash and Denise Morgan, Kent State University (2015)**

We are both interested in research investigating preparing teachers to teach writing and have taught dedicated writing courses to preservice teachers. At the time of our writing the article, there was limited research on writing and preservice teachers. We identified a need in the field when conducting literature searches to support and ground our own work. More recently there has been a noticed increase in research dedicated to how preservice teachers learn to teach writing, but this area is still under-researched, in our opinion.

When examining the other Emig Award-winning articles, we noticed there are only a few studies with a specific focus on writing. We appreciate that writing researchers advocated for writing as a transformative practice, examined the influence of teacher experience in a writing project, and explored how students design multimodal compositions. We noticed that our study appears to be somewhat of an outlier in that it is the only literature review and spans the K–12 grades. While our study broadly looked at how teachers were prepared, other award winners provided a more in-depth examination of teacher preparation.

### **Detra Price-Dennis, Teachers College, Columbia (2014, 2017)**

As a writing project fellow, I hold close to my heart a piece of advice I learned during my inaugural summer institute: “Let your writing be a guide to find the answers you seek.” As I reflect on the content analysis of the past Emig Award winners, I find myself in the company of thoughtful colleagues who enact this ideal through our scholarship. The body of work that has received the Emig Award has explored critical literacy, social justice, pedagogical change, teacher education, and the benefits of expanding notions of literacies. Collectively this research has influenced the questions I continue to ask about literacy teaching and learning, methodologies I want to experiment with in my research design, and innovative ways classroom teachers merge theory into practice. I am always inspired by the questions I learn to ask by reading the work of Emig Award winners and appreciate the influence this body of work has on my scholarship.

### **Danny Martinez, University of California–Davis (2018)**

It excites me to see the themes as they highlight the need to expand what counts as literacy, learning, and social justice within the field of English edu-

cation. They also point to the shift in how and who gets to conduct research as partnerships with teachers, and inquiry into pedagogy are being honored. These themes also frustrate me in that we have been urging scholars and practitioners to engage in this work for some time now, and based on winning articles, we have much more to do. *But*, this frustration is what also fuels the work that must be done in English education.

As I think of my own piece, I am not sure where I fit neatly into one of these themes. Perhaps in 1, 3, and 4? I wrote my piece during a time when Black bodies were being killed by police officers across the country—when Brown bodies were being surveilled and murdered as well by law enforcement and ICE. These themes (1, 3, and 4) may not have been central, yet the feeling of urgency resonated with me to change how literacy and language pedagogy was happening in our English classrooms for Black and Brown youth who were being targeted. I am hopeful that *English Education* is shifting and including voices of more scholars of color and recognizing that the racialized and minoritized state of youth in English classrooms must be accounted for in our empirical research. This direction encourages me to submit future work to the journal and to encourage others as well.

## Returning to Karen

The articles provide insight into elements of research and practice English educators value, or, as Smagorinsky notes, they are a social construction of what the selection committee members value. His response sparked a conversation with the editorial team about masked review. For the first time this year, I reviewed entries for the 2019 NCTE Annual Convention. I was surprised to see the names of the presenters and their affiliations, especially when one proposal was from professors at my university. I had assumed that these proposals would be masked, the way journal pieces are. Tara, who reviewed proposals for both NCTE and ELATE, told me how she had been assigned my proposal for ELATE to review. ELATE's proposals *were* masked, but the content of the proposal made it clear I was the author. Is there a way to take away potential bias of favoritism for content or methods or people? Or, could we accept there is a human factor when making these decisions and acknowledge that, imperfect though the process may be, the one article chosen each year *can* represent ideas valued by our community of educators?

Setting aside the selection-process caveat, the Emig Award authors' responses do provide helpful suggestions for where we, as professionals advocating for ELA educators, can expand our focus on equity and social justice. Whitney's, Kirell and Smith's, Price-Dennis's, and Martinez's responses all note the importance of this focus, its presence in current research, and a

continued need for it in future research. Similarly, Tremmel observes the majority of the winners worked at institutions east of the Mississippi River or in California, raising the question of, *Why?* Might this be an issue of equity and access or of an intellectual and/or political divide among scholars represented in *English Education*?

As a doctoral candidate whose research focuses on the teaching of writing in secondary classrooms, twice I exclaimed aloud “Yes!!” when reading the responses. The first was Kirell and Smith’s statement: “Furthermore, only one article (our own) addresses the preparation of teacher educators. We were surprised by this.” It makes sense that if we study what preservice teachers need to be successful, we should also be studying what teacher educators need to be successful. The second exclamation came at Pytash and Morgan’s acknowledgment: “More recently there has been a noticed increase on research dedicated to how preservice teachers learn to teach writing, but this area is still under-researched, in our opinion.” I couldn’t agree more; students need to be taught how to write for a world beyond the classroom, and this can happen when preservice teachers are given the opportunity to learn how to *teach* writing, not just *assign* it. I acknowledge that I am biased in my reaction to the responses, though, having transitioned from teaching English in secondary schools for 15 years and having returned to graduate school because of my frustration with ineffective writing instruction. I expect that not everyone would be as moved by the same comments.

Journals such as *English Education* value the voices of practitioners, but teachers can struggle to find the time to write, much less navigate the process of peer-reviewed journals. Accessing *English Education* requires a subscription, whether personal or institutional, which could also limit work produced by classroom teachers. They also probably do not experience the same “publish or perish” pressure as the Emig Award winners, the great majority of whom are at Research 1 institutions. Fortunately, newer opportunities for teachers to engage with a broader audience, such as blogs and other social media platforms, are enabling them to share what they are learning from their classroom practice.

To close, I will take a moment to highlight a major challenge in the field of education that is not of our making but is a reality we must face: politics. Whitney remarks that her 2009 article was written “in a context of the deprofessionalization of teaching. That trend has continued into 2019.” Kirell and Smith similarly observe how “national discourse denigrates public schools” and call for “deliberatively seeking out the voices of classroom teachers and teacher educators . . . who must daily navigate the increasingly wide chasm between best practices and political expediency.” A sense of frustrated

urgency threads through these responses, encapsulated in Whitney’s “there is much yet to do” and Martinez’s “we have much more to do.”

The Emig Award winning articles have provided a glimpse into the conversations happening within English teacher education, but they also suggest that some conversations could be addressed more. At a time when teachers are going on strike to earn a living wage and success is defined by students’ test scores, we need to continue to challenge the status quo and to deliberately bring all members of the education community together, from students in classrooms to researchers at universities, to share knowledge and experiences that empower students and educators.

## Notes

1. When I expand my analysis, I will endeavor to answer Tremmel’s question in his reflection: “What the hell was I doing—or trying to do?”

2. According to the Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education. We used the 2018 listing, so we acknowledge that some of the authors’ institutions may have changed status since the time of their publication.

5. At time of publication, both contributors were at MSU. Kirell is now at Lonestar College and Smith is at Fairfield University.



**Karen Morris** is a doctoral candidate at Penn State in Curriculum and Instruction where she researches how preservice teachers choose to teach writing in secondary ELA classrooms. She has been an NCTE member since 2014. She can be contacted at kem158@psu.edu.

The **2019 Editorial Team** consists of the four people pictured on this issue’s masthead: Tara Star Johnson, editor; Lanette Jimerson and Shea Kerkhoff, assistant editors; and David Premont, editorial assistant.