

# IATE NEWSLETTER

Monthly Newsletter of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English

## NEWS & FEATURES

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"We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends." ~Mary McLeod Bethune

## A Letter From Our Executive Secretary

BY KAITLIN GLAUSE

The new year is always an exciting and turbulent time. As we celebrate our resolutions for the year ahead, we also are met with a new set of challenges and expectations that require us to problem solve, adapt, and think critically about our commitments. For English educators, 2022 has already presented a series of challenges: in the state of Illinois, censorship battles have risen dramatically (ILA, 2021), debates about masking and student/teacher health are beginning again (NBC Chicago, 2022), and with the increase of virtual classrooms, even snow days have come up for debate (Chalkbeat Chicago, 2022) with teachers educating children from their homes, often with their own children learning nearby.

(continued on page 2)

# Executive Secretary's Note, Cont.

The education landscape is always shifting as communities negotiate their priorities for learning in schools. But despite these shifting landscapes that cause teachers additional strain, I am always overwhelmed by educators' commitment to the wellbeing and learning of their students.

Teachers are advocates. English language arts educators are constantly advocating for our students, whether they've asked us to or not. We provide rationale for our reading curriculum and libraries, support students in shaping their voices to respond to the world around them, and make last minute adjustments to our plans to align with the wishes of our districts and the needs of our students - to name just a few examples.

We know that teachers (while we often persist in almost superhuman ways) are, in fact, humans. We have feelings, good days and bad days, joys and anxieties. And while we do often find ways to deliver on the promise of education, even in the face of shifting landscapes, we must also recognize that these human endeavors require intensive emotional labor and are best done together.

You do not have to move mountains by yourself. As many of you likely already have, I encourage you to find a community of like-minded peers and colleagues who can support you through these challenging moments (book contests, virtual snow days, curricular adjustments, etc.).

Find the colleagues who can support you in overcoming the challenge of the moment while also helping you ask critical questions about why that challenge came up in the first place, and what we (a community of committed ELA educators and scholars) can do about it. These are the moments, the questions, and the hard work that we can share through our newsletters, journals, and conferences to shape the future of ELA education.

I encourage you to reach out to your IATE district leader as a person who can support you in developing a community of colleagues who share similar interests and questions. If you see that your district doesn't have a leader, I encourage you to become one so that you can take a step toward building those strong networks of colleagues.

I also encourage you to lean on your IATE community if you have a particular challenge that you need support in overcoming. You can reach out to Amy Magnafichi Strong, our Intellectual Freedom Chair, if you need support in responding to a curricular challenge; you can reach out to Kim Kotty, our District Leader Coordinator, if you need support in IATE networking; you can reach out to me or Deborah Will, our IATE President, if you have questions about professional development that you want to see from IATE in support of the work you are trying to do in your classroom.

Yes, our longevity and our resilience are built upon our own sense of self-worth, but they are also built on the strength of our community. In the cold and dark of winter, I encourage you to find those colleagues whose shared vision and commitments can bring you joy and meaning, even to the most challenging work.

# Technology Corner

BY SHANNON RADCLIFFE

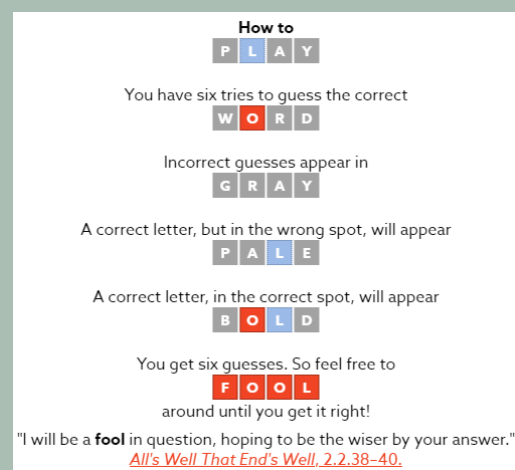
## Prattle: Combining Your Loves Of Wordle and Shakespeare

Getting students engaged in Shakespeare units can be difficult, especially when students are intimidated by his use of language. Luckily, the Folger Shakespeare Library has developed a new game, called Prattle, to help engage your students and examine how Shakespeare used language in his work.

Prattle is just like the extremely popular word game Wordle, which I bet some of your students (and maybe even you) are already playing. You have six chances to guess a five-letter word. Much like Wordle, a letter turns blue when it is in the word but in the wrong place and red when it is in the correct place. The difference is that Prattle only uses words that are used within Shakespeare's works. When you win the game, you have the option to see how Shakespeare used the word and are provided with quotes from Shakespeare's plays that contain the word. You can filter by play or look at them all!

This would be a great way to build classroom community and engagement while also encouraging students to analyze Shakespeare's use of language. It can be used as individual work or as a collaborative class activity. Because Shakespeare often uses words on different ways than we might use them today, it could lead to a great discussion about the evolution of language. Some quotes may be rich in figurative language that you can analyze with your class. The possibilities are endless! You can find the game at [Prattle.folger.edu](https://prattle.folger.edu).

Prattle is just like the extremely popular word game Wordle, which I bet some of your students (and maybe even you) are already playing.



### Did you know that we have a job board?

If you know of something that might be of interest to our membership, send the information to [iatenctonline@gmail.com](mailto:iatenctonline@gmail.com) and we'll get it in the next newsletter.

# Rationale Corner

BY AMY MAGNAFICHI STRONG,  
INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM COMMITTEE CHAIR

## BOOK RATIONALE FOR: The Hate You Give

Below is a rationale that may be used for your school or classroom. Please feel free to update or edit to fit your needs.

### Bibliographic Citation

Thomas, Angie. The Hate You Give. Balzer & Bray, 2017.

### Intended Audience

Please include which grade you are using this book with and if it is a whole class, reading list, or small group text.

### Brief Summary of the Work

Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter sits precariously between two worlds: the poor neighborhood where she lives and the swanky, suburban prep school she attends. This uneasy balance is blown wide open when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend, Khalil, at the hands of a police officer.

### Relationship of the Text to the Curriculum

As our classrooms become more diverse, it is essential that we include culturally relevant texts. Many textbooks in use across the country devote little to no time about the origins of racism or worse, contain false narratives. Students of color deserve to see their history, their stories studied with as much acumen as the mainstream history and stories often told. This novel is in response to social issues that are occurring in our nation right now. This provides the opportunity for students to hone critical thinking skills, as well as facilitate thoughtful discussion. Because Thomas's novel is considered by many to have strong literary merit, the topics that can be studied will apply to many of the state standards for ELA. This text also fulfills the Illinois Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards.

Include a brief description of teaching methods, activities, and assessments here. You can also add specific State Standards if you would like.

### Impact of the Book

This text provides themes involving injustice, systemic racism, poverty, and identity. Through guided discussion, students will be able identify and analyze symbols, motifs, and pop culture references. Students will also be able to engage in discussions about real-world implications of such things as gun violence, policing, identity, and friendship and family relationships. The weaponization of stereotypes to justify violence can also be explored. The text also provides students with the opportunity to explore how they can impact their communities through participating in social justice and creating a more equitable society. (cont. page 5)





# Rationale Corner, Cont.

The Hate You Give gives students many opportunities to further research events, people, and pop culture references that play a role in the novel. At the end of the text, students will be able to make text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.

Finally, this text will provide students with an opportunity to discover how to discuss, explore, evaluate, and synthesize difficult topics in a supportive environment.

## Potential Problems with the Text

The text contains instances of gun violence that may be triggering for some students. There is also some sexual content, profanity, drug abuse, and underage drinking. “The book does not deeply explore the riot that occurs, nor does it necessarily work through characters’ understanding of it; students might need this event contextualized outside the content of the novel” (Natbony).

None of the above are frivolously used, but rather, they convey a realistic representation of differing communities, friendships, and teen struggles.

## Collection of Information About the Text

Lists, Awards, and Review:

National Book Award for Young Adult Literature, Longlist, 2017

Audie Award for Young Adult, Winner, 2017

Carnegie Medal, Honor, 2017

Coretta Scott King Book Award, Honor, 2017

Michael L. Printz Award, Winner, 2018

Kirkus Prize Finalist and Starred Review

Kirkus Review:

*/\* Starred Review \*/* Gr. 9 and up— “Sixteen-year-old Starr Carter is a black girl and an expert at navigating the two worlds she exists in: one at Garden Heights, her black neighborhood, and the other at Williamson Prep, her suburban, mostly white high school.

Walking the line between the two becomes immensely harder when Starr is present at the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend, Khalil, by a white police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Khalil’s death becomes national news, where he’s called a thug and possible drug dealer and gangbanger. His death becomes justified in the eyes of many, including one of Starr’s best friends at school. The police’s lackadaisical attitude sparks anger and then protests in the community, turning it into a war zone. Questions remain about what happened in the moments leading to Khalil’s death, and the only witness is Starr, who must now decide what to say or do, if anything. Thomas cuts to the heart of the matter for Starr and for so many like her, laying bare the systemic racism that undergirds her world, and she does so honestly and inescapably, balancing heartbreak and humor.

(continued page 6)

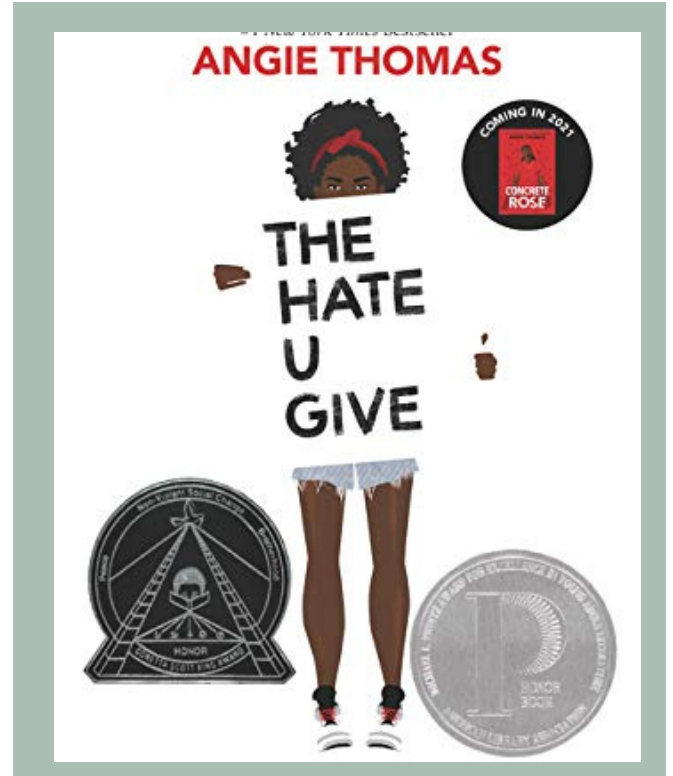
# Rationale Corner, Cont.

With smooth but powerful prose delivered in Starr's natural, emphatic voice, finely nuanced characters, and intricate and realistic relationship dynamics, this novel will have readers rooting for Starr and opening their hearts to her friends and family.

This story is necessary. This story is important." –Kirkus Review, December 6, 2016

## About the Author

Thomas was raised in Jackson, Mississippi, not far from where the Civil Rights Activist, Medgar Evers, was assassinated. She has been witness to gun violence throughout her childhood, and her mother often took her to the library to show her there was more in the world than just what she encountered daily. Thomas earned a BFA in writing from Belhaven University. In multiple interviews, Thomas has stated that her intention is to always be truthful and to tear apart stereotypes. She has said, "I want to make you think at times; I want to make you laugh at times; I want to make you cry at times" (NPR Interview). *The Hate You Give* is Angie Thomas's debut novel.



## Alternative Works for an Individual Student

Reynolds, Jason, and Brendan Kiely. *All American Boys*. Reprint, Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2017.

"One single act of violence is all it takes to completely change the lives of two teenagers. This bestselling novel will foster important and necessary discussions in your classroom about race relations, privilege, police brutality, and the meaning of community in modern America." –Prestwick House

.....

Hansberry, Lorraine, and Robert Nemiroff. *A Raisin in the Sun*. Reprint, Reissue, Vintage, 2004.

"*A Raisin in the Sun*, a play about a black family striving for their share of the American Dream, remains a relevant discussion of one generation's struggle to offer the next a better life. We see an individual's battle for dignity and a family's effort to protect loved ones, even in hardship. While race is at the heart of the book, the Youngers' story is universal, and your classes will recognize themselves in it." –Prestwick House (cont. page 7)

# Rationale Corner, Cont.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son* (Perennial Classics). 1st ed., Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005.

"Bigger Thomas, a young, quick-tempered black man in 1940s Chicago, accidentally kills his wealthy white employer's daughter. What follows is a thrilling crime novel in its own right that is suitable for students who chronically complain about how "boring" classroom literature is. Wright's classic also raises the unanswerable questions of race and social justice in pre-Civil Rights America. *Native Son* is a book that will awaken its readers and leave a lasting impression in your students' minds with its unrelenting portrayal of the inevitability of its main character's fate." –Prestwick House

## Created with the aid of the following:

Prestwick House Book Summaries

NPR.org interview of Angie Thomas

Kirkus Review

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## Membership

IATE membership works toward maintaining and advancing the professionalism of the English/Language Arts field. Your membership benefits you through:

- Providing a means to make your concerns heard by state officials
- Expanding your network of educational contacts across the state
- Keeping you up-to-date through the annual IATE Fall Conference and IATE publications like the Illinois English Bulletin and the IATE Newsletter
- Promotion the recognition of outstanding members of our profession

Did you know that we offer a free, one-year membership to all teachers who have not previously been a member of IATE and to students?

You can become a member by clicking here: [iateonline.org](http://iateonline.org)

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## District Leaders Wanted

The IATE Executive Board and District Leader Coordinator Kim Kotty are excited to find leaders for our open districts. If you would be interested in serving as a district leader or co- leader, please email [kkotty@fenwickfriars.com](mailto:kkotty@fenwickfriars.com). Next to each open district, you will see the counties it encompasses.

Open districts are as follows:

- East Central: Champaign, Ford, Iroquois, Kankakee, Piatt, Vermillion
- Illinois Valley: Bureau, Grundy, LaSalle, Marshall, Putnam
- Kaskaskia Valley: Clinton, Monroe, St. Claire, Washington
- Northeastern: Boone, Carroll, JoDaviess, Stephenson, Winnebago
- Rock River: DeKalb, Lee, Ogle, Whiteside
- Wabash Valley: Clay, Crawford, Edwards, Lawrence, Richland, Wabash, Wayne, White
- Western: Fulton, Henderson, Knox, McDonough, Stark, Warren

# PUBLISH YOUR WORK IN THE IATE NEWSLETTER

The IATE Newsletter welcomes articles, reviews, reports, announcements, brief teaching narratives, calls for papers, and other material important to the professional lives of English teachers in the state of Illinois. IATE district leaders are especially encouraged to send reports of district events. For any timely information, the deadline for submitting for the next month's newsletter is the second week of the previous month. All other submissions will be taken on a rolling basis.

## **Recurring columns:**

**Technology in the Classroom** (250-500 words) - Submissions for this column could include reviews of devices, programs, and/or apps for the classroom, as well as lesson ideas utilizing technology in the classroom. Submissions should include the name of the technology, as well as any cost associated with it.

**IATE Reads** (400-600 words) - This column is devoted to building our libraries, both professionally and for our students. You might consider sharing books that are great for read-alouds or First Chapter Fridays, books that speak to our students and their experiences, or books for our professional libraries. Submissions might also include ideas for teaching specific books, places to find affordable books, discipline specific books to create cross-discipline connections, and other ideas for creating lifelong readers. When sharing recommendations and ideas, please include the text title, author, and publisher, as well as a "recommended for."

**Job Corner** (100-200 words) - Do you know of any English openings that you can share? Please include any details about the job and district, as well as contact information.

**Brag Corner** (100-200 words) - Tell us something good! Pat yourself on the back or pat someone else on the back. Let's celebrate the good things happening around us.

**Honoring Our Retirees** (100-200 words) - Our veteran teachers deserve recognition for their contributions to our profession. If you know someone retiring from the English classroom, tell us! Let us give them a "cheers for all their years!"

**A Tribute to Meaningful Educators** (100-200 words) - We all have someone who inspired us or inspires us as an English educator. This column is devoted to your favorite English teacher. Be sure to share who they are, where they are, and why they hold a special place in your heart. Pictures of your honoree are welcomed for this column.

**But What About?** (100 words) - This column is devoted to all of those questions we have as educators, whether we are new or veterans. Send in your questions and we'll provide the platform for sharing ideas and answers to your most pressing issues, even if it's as simple as maintaining your classroom library or how to make time for that bathroom break. (cont. page 9)



**Teacher Creators** - We teach in the English classroom, but we also have passions and talents outside of those four walls. Share your work with us. We invite submissions of original poetry and prose, photography, cartoons, art. You name it. Your submission should include your name, affiliation, and a brief statement accompanying your piece.

Please send inquiries or submissions via e-mail to Michelle Ryan at [iatenctonline@gmail.com](mailto:iatenctonline@gmail.com).

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# Exploring Alternatives to the Traditional: Career Profile of Teacher Yameira Church

BY DELORES ROBINSON

For English teachers interested in career opportunities other than the more traditional, Yameira Church's path may inspire others to explore what's possible with an English degree and teacher training.

After graduating from Ottawa High School where a school-based assistant teacher program allowed her a behind-the-scenes look at a possible career in the classroom (an opportunity she says was "pivotal" in her decision to be a teacher), Yameira completed a transfer program at her local community college while clocking observation hours in both private and public high school classrooms.

Originally intending to teach high school English, she didn't enjoy the age group as much as she had anticipated. Then, during her teacher training at the four-year university to which she had transferred, Yameira was subjected to a series of ugly encounters and racist treatment that led to her decision to leave the program her junior year. After completing her B.A. in 2016, Yameira remembered her childhood dream to study and teach abroad, and within a few months, she secured a teaching job in China.

To teach in Shanghai as a foreigner, Yameira needed a TEFL/TESOL certification, so she completed an online, four-month certification program through Cambridge University and graduated with high honors and her certification. Shanghai is one of the most highly sought teaching placements and receiving a visa to teach there is a competitive process.

The teaching placement in Shanghai was challenging and exciting, and Yameira says she "fell in love with the culture and people." She says, "Something that surprised me and really disappointed me was that working as a teacher in China pays significantly better than in the United States. American school districts are beginning to understand that they need to better train, pay, and retain teachers. There are so many wonderful professional development programs as well as districts paying for teachers to get their graduate degree and it's really amazing to witness this trend. I hope that teachers continue to fight for what they are worth!" (cont. page 10)

# Exploring Alternatives to the Traditional: Career Profile of Teacher Yameira Church, Cont.

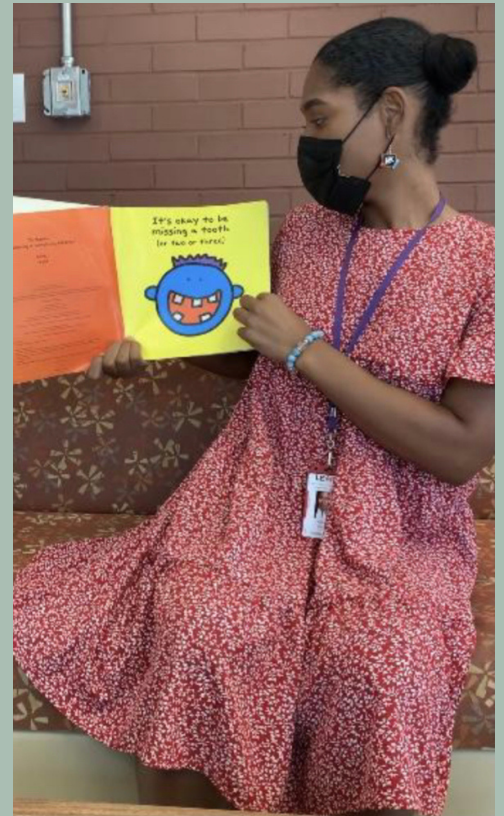
In the spring of 2020, Yameira was training to become an administrator of a Shanghai-based school and thinking about an eventual move to Dubai to work as an English-language teacher and administrator in the United Arab Emirates. Then, the pandemic began.

"I wasn't planning to return to the United States, but I also did not plan on a global pandemic. In the early months of the pandemic, especially, it was unsafe for Americans in China. I received a small stipend from the United States government to return to Illinois to teach, and currently I am teaching first grade in a charter school in south Chicago. Each day is filled with endless laughs and explorative learning."

Yameria says she loves her students and the community, but the role is challenging. She says, "Charter schools rely heavily on data and although data can provide many helpful insights to student learning and teacher practices, I often feel like I don't have many opportunities to expose them to a more well-rounded curriculum apart from math and reading lessons." She looks on her time in this position as a way to learn more about all school settings.

Yameira remains happy to have become a teacher. She says, "Teaching has honestly impacted me in more ways than I can count.

I would have never imagined myself to be as patient and open-minded as I am now. I have dealt with parents physically assaulting me, voicing random observations [about me], a student's bowels exploding on me, schools openly telling me they wouldn't hire a black teacher, scenarios I never would have imagined. Each experience has grown my understanding and patience when dealing with people. The biggest impact teaching has made on me is that I now know my worth. When you can influence others in a positive way, you soon begin to apply your own teaching methods on yourself!"



Reading It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr for my class in September 2021.



My students' first snow in January 2018.

# Exploring Alternatives to the Traditional: Career Profile of Teacher Yameira Church, Cont.

Where else might her English teacher education take her? Yameira says, “Down the road I see myself still working in education but taking a step back from the classroom. I have always been active in all the communities I have lived in and hope to bridge my love for community and teaching. I have had some interesting jobs approach me, but I do not think I am quite ready to jump ship. In a perfect world I would revive and host the TV show, The Reading Rainbow! I would have policymakers, baristas, cops, painters, anyone on the show to come read just to highlight the importance of reading and to emphasize that everyone should have access to the world of reading for pleasure. Hosting a state video literary program would be AMAZING. I need to figure out how to get this in motion....!”

As a first-generation college student, Yameira says it was challenging to navigate college and her career aspirations. She says it’s so important for teachers in the field to offer their mentorship and guidance to less experienced teachers. “I have been blessed with amazing teachers who have helped me explore all my options and who have been there to hype me up and give me the extra push I needed when I’m beginning a new part of my journey.” She adds, “My family are also my rock. They keep me motivated and are always willing to hop in the car or on a plane to visit me wherever I am in the world.”

She concludes, “There will always be those who say a young person shouldn’t get into teaching because of this or that...but [I say] don’t listen to them. Our state and country need passionate, eager, and innovative educators more than they ever have. GO FOR IT!”

Yameira welcomes connections with other educators. She says, “I am active on Facebook and Instagram. You can find me using @YameiraEssence for both accounts. Please feel free to reach out with other questions!”



My first-grade class reviewing number symbols. August 2021, Chicago, IL.  
\*All images provided by Yameira.

"Teaching has honestly impacted me in more ways than I can count. I would have never imagined myself to be as patient and open-minded as I am now. I have dealt with parents physically assaulting me, voicing random observations [about me], a student's bowels exploding on me, schools openly telling me they wouldn't hire a black teacher, scenarios I never would have imagined. Each experience has grown my understanding and patience when dealing with people. The biggest impact teaching has made on me is that I now know my worth. When you can influence others in a positive way, you soon begin to apply your own teaching methods on yourself!"



# Celebrating a New Chapter - RFP

BY BETSY GEISELMAN

This year, the Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE) is planning to host our annual conference in Decatur, Illinois! Our annual conference, whose theme is “Celebrating a New Chapter,” will be held at Millikin University, on October 21-22, 2022. We chose this location to recognize our partnership with Millikin, IATE’s new institutional home. The conference theme—“Celebrating a New Chapter”—highlights some exciting changes IATE is implementing, and it marks the transition between the challenges of pandemic teaching and the possibilities ahead.



As English teachers, we are experts at turning the page and looking forward to new chapters, while still acknowledging how the previous ones shaped us. One key way this past chapter has been transformational is that it has reminded us of the value of our presence in the classroom, and the dearth of the relationships we share with our students, our colleagues, and our communities. The Program Committee is looking for sessions which demonstrate how, in creating new chapters in our teaching, ones that innovate and empower, we keep relationships and connections at the forefront of our thinking and design.

Fill out the 2022 IATE Conference RFP at: <https://tinyurl.com/IATEPresent2022> by Friday, March 18, 2022. RFPs can be found at the link above. If you have any questions, please contact the Program Committee at [betsy.geiselman@cchs165.com](mailto:betsy.geiselman@cchs165.com).

Thank you for your involvement with IATE, and we look forward to hearing from you!

**Join us for a great presentation by the  
founder of #ClassroomBookADay  
Jillian Heise!**



**Selecting Inclusive Texts  
& Developing a Critical  
Lens**

**February 25, 2022  
8:30 am - 3:30 pm  
(virtual)**

Join the Lake County ROE on February 25th for a workshop that will elevate your classroom experiences. Jillian Heise, creator of #ClassroomBookADay! will be presenting, Selecting Inclusive Texts & Developing a Critical Lens. This full-day workshop will be a virtual event that will leave you better equipped and inspired to develop a more inclusive reading culture that supports all students in your school!

<https://www.lake.k12.il.us/event-details/selecting-inclusive-texts-developing-a-critical-lens-sd85128>



# Publish Your Work in the Illinois English Bulletin

Spring 2022: Open Issue  
Deadline: March 01, 2022

The spring 2022 issue of the Illinois English Bulletin will feature scholarly articles across a range of contexts and genres with relevance to our audience of literacy teachers, middle and high school English language arts instructors, and collegiate English educators. The past two years have resulted in personal and professional upheaval for educators across the state - from a global pandemic to the ongoing national response to social and economic injustices. With this upheaval, we recognize the particular challenges of preparing scholarly work for publication. To that end, we leave this call open for educators and scholars to engage with the work that is most pressing to them at this time - especially as we imagine a new age for literacy and ELA education. Authors may consider, but are not limited to, questions such as:

- What inquiry and scholarship have you done that expands our understanding of literacy, language arts, and English?
- How have your practices and pedagogies changed and shifted in response to the ongoing tensions of the past two years?
- What do readers of IEB need to explore and consider?
- How do you engage with the intersections of literature, literacy, language, culture, social justice, and/or collective wellness?
- What are the practices and pedagogies that you hope to take with you into the future to facilitate student and community language, literacy, and learning?

Please submit manuscripts to Michelle Ryan ([iatenctonline@gmail.com](mailto:iatenctonline@gmail.com)).

Additional information can be found at: <https://iateonline.org/iate-publications/illinois-english-bulletin/>

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## Writing for the Illinois English Bulletin: Tips for Publication

Michelle Ryan, Editor ([mryan@lchsrailers.org](mailto:mryan@lchsrailers.org) or [iatenctonline@gmail.com](mailto:iatenctonline@gmail.com))  
Kaitlin Glause, Executive Secretary ([kglause@millikin.edu](mailto:kglause@millikin.edu))

### 1 - Write about what you know and experience as an educator.

Your daily life as an educator or researcher provides great fodder for writing. For instance, you could write about a home-run lesson, professional development session you led, or conference presentation you recently gave. (cont. page 12)

# Writing for the Illinois English Bulletin: Tips for Publication, Cont.

Here are some steps you can take to move your professional life into a manuscript:

- Carve out 30 minutes after that lesson or presentation to reflect on what went well.
- Free write about any telling anecdotes that illustrate what you want to share.
- Outline the moves you made during a lesson, both visible and invisible to your students.
- Consider what language moves you can incorporate to “coach” someone else who wants to try out what you’re so excited to share.
- Take the bulleted points from a presentation (i.e., professional development session or conference presentation) and expand each of to tell the “story” you want to share.
- Review recent literature that connects to your writing to better situate your writing.
- Remember: Even writing 15-30 minutes a day will eventually lead to a finished manuscript.

## **2 - Keep your intended journal in mind as you write.**

Get to know the journal. Carefully review the aim, scope and guidelines on the journal’s website. Skim the last 2-3 issues of a journal. (For members, an archive of issues is available on the IATE website.) Does the writing resonate with your own work? If so, this journal might be a good fit for your scholarship. Then, reread any articles relevant to your scholarship to consider how you can situate your work in relation to them while also moving the conversation forward. Finally, take note of articles that inspire you (even if the topic is dissimilar from your own). You could map out the rhetorical moves authors use to get a sense of what the audience would expect and consider what writing moves you could adapt for your own purposes.

The Illinois English Bulletin accepts manuscripts written in a range of genres, including:

- Methods (i.e. practical strategies for preparing ELA pre-service teachers)
- Practice (i.e. successful teaching practices, professional development)
- Research (i.e. original qualitative, classroom-based studies)
- Critical Pedagogy (i.e. political essay exposing a social injustice)
- Narrative (i.e. first-person account of a compelling teaching/classroom story)
- Criticism (i.e. in depth critique of literary text(s) or author(s))
- Review (i.e. evaluate current texts related to English education)
- Essay, Fiction, Memoir, and other original creative work (cont. page 13)

# Writing for the Illinois English Bulletin: Tips for Publication, Cont.

## **3 – Reach out to professional colleagues for writing and publication support.**

Journal editors, reviewers, and others invested in the world of English language arts want you to succeed in sharing your story as a language arts educator. If you're unsure if your work fits the journal, are wondering about the expected timeline for reviews, or want to check on the status of a manuscript you submitted, don't hesitate to email the journal editors.

Here's how the process works: After journal editors have received all manuscripts for an issue deadline, they read them all carefully; they will then seek out 2-3 reviewers for pieces they identify as being a good fit for the journal. The reviewers will carefully read your manuscript to provide questions and suggestions for revision, which will be returned to you, the author, with a decision about publication in the journal. If your manuscript is moving forward with the journal, you'll be asked to make revisions using the reviewer's feedback. Remember that rejection is also a regular part of writing. It doesn't necessarily mean that your work is not important to the greater language arts educational community; it just means that it's not ready yet. If you do get rejected, keep at it. You can take the feedback from the editors and reviewers to keep building upon and refining your work.

## **4 – Ask for critical feedback and use it to shape your writing.**

A critical step in the writing process is asking for, receiving, and utilizing critical feedback from colleagues to help shape your writing. During the publication process, reviewers are responsible for critiquing your writing and scholarship to meet or exceed the level of academic quality for the journal. Therefore, in submitting your work to the journal, you are seeking their feedback in hopes of moving your work forward. Carefully attend to feedback you get from reviewers and colleagues. Don't just say, "They don't get it," but ask yourself why reviewers don't get it and use that to move forward.

When receiving critical feedback, here are some suggestions to guide your revision process:

- Think about why you received that feedback. How did your audience understand your work? How do you want them to understand your work?
- Think about the revisions you're making. How is this revision improving the quality of your manuscript? How is this revision addressing the needs of your reader?
- Create a table with feedback from colleagues or reviewers and use it to keep track of your revisions and your rationale for those revisions.
- If you're confused by feedback, seek advice from more experienced scholars (even the editors) or a critical writer's group with colleagues to talk through the reviewer's comments. (cont. page 13)

# Writing for the Illinois English Bulletin: Tips for Publication, Cont.

## 5 – Keep your audience in mind. What are you contributing to the ongoing conversation?

Our writing never feels ready for an outside audience, but sometimes it's a matter of it being ready enough. When you submit your manuscript to IEB, we ask that you also submit a cover letter. Use the cover letter to speak directly to editors and reviewers; use this space to explain how your work is situated within the scope of the journal as well as to explain how your work makes a unique contribution. This is the goal: we want our writing to get the reader thinking in new ways.

Here are some guiding questions to help you think about your contributions to the field:

- How does your manuscript help further an ongoing scholarly conversation?
- How are you drawing upon your own experiences and knowledge to further the conversation?
- How are you drawing upon the experiences and knowledge of the broader scholarly community to further the conversation?
- What new perspectives, strategies, and/or practices will other educators learn or be able to think about after reading your manuscript?

## Invitation to Review for Illinois English Bulletin

One of the best ways to get ready to write is by being a reviewer. When you review, you have the opportunity to see and learn from others' feedback. Likewise, being a reviewer helps you develop a critical lens when examining your own work. If you're interested in reviewing (even if you haven't done it before), please reach out to us to learn more.

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## IATE Reads

BY JEN GOVIN

If you're looking for a fun escape from the winter doldrums and/or in need of a series to overcome a reading slump, Elle Cosimano's Finlay Donovan series will not disappoint. In this series of two books (so far), single mother and author Finlay Donovan's life is a mess: she's dealing with her ex-husband and his new fiancée, a depleted bank account, a terrible case of writer's block, and immense pressure from her agent. It's a case of mistaken identity when someone overhears her discussing her next book's plot with her agent and assumes she's a hitwoman. After she unintentionally takes on a contract, hilarity and disaster after disaster occur. With her trusty sidekick, Vero, who also happens to be the nanny that Finlay's ex-husband fired, they stumble their way through a life of crime.

Finlay Donovan Is Killing It and Finlay Donovan Knocks 'Em Dead are a load of fun in a time that often isn't. If you need a pick-me-up, I strongly suggest giving this series a chance.



# From the President

BY DEB WILL

It's the beginning of February, and I'm seeing Black History Month displays at our libraries, parks, and schools. At our school, this year's Black History Month celebrations are not just one night of events; we have something new every week and throughout the day. I'm glad that this celebration takes place and is becoming ubiquitous in our communities, and I'd like to encourage our membership to participate in the National African American Read-In sponsored by NCTE. ([Read more about this event here.](#))

And while I'm excited to promote opportunities to celebrate African American writers, thinkers and speakers, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge that we should be honoring the work of talented black writers and incorporating their works into our curricula all year long. It is not enough to celebrate Black History Month in classrooms in February or by reading for one day with NCTE; rather, we may see these celebrations as opportunities to pique students' interests and provide experiences for students to hear new voices.

One text that my students and I enjoyed reading together this year in our Project LIT Book Club is Legendborn, by Tracey Deonn, a writer students may not have previously known. When our group realized that the sequel won't be out for months, I felt a collective anticipation that I haven't felt in years. Because there are so many great books to read, I often patiently await sequels. Not so with this series! I have already pre-ordered Book #2: Bloodmarked.

At the last IATE Executive Council Meeting, we decided to begin compiling recommended book lists for our membership. Our intention is to help our members as they search for new voices for their classrooms. We hope that you will participate in this collaborative work with our Executive Council.

What are you and your students reading? What texts would you recommend to colleagues searching for books that may connect with their students? If you have texts that speak to your student's hearts and minds as we seek to provide culturally responsive classes for our students, I hope you will share your recommendations with us by [submitting this form](#). With your responses, we will compile a list of books that we as an organization recommend.

At a time when many books written by BIPOC and LGBTQIA authors are being challenged, let's work together to amplify voices to keep them from being silenced. Let's help one another so that we have resources as we begin planning curriculum. This survey takes less than five minutes.

If you haven't already done so, please take a moment. [Share your knowledge with your colleagues using this form](#). Together, let's continue the celebration all year long.

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## IATE Leadership

**President:** Deb Will, Zion-Benton Township High School, [willd@zbths.org](mailto:willd@zbths.org)

**First Vice President:** Jen Gouin, Lincoln Community High School, [jgouin@lchsraillers.org](mailto:jgouin@lchsraillers.org)

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**Treasurer:** Michelle Ryan, Lincoln Community High School, Lincoln, [mryan@lchsraillers.org](mailto:mryan@lchsraillers.org)

# ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENT

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Sessions Presented by the  
Academic Support Professionals  
of  
**ILLINOIS VALLEY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Session 1: Tools and Strategies for  
Teaching Media Literacy

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Session 2: Supporting Students to and  
Through College: Helping Students  
Succeed, Thrive, and Matter

Free Event

CPDUs Provided

Register at [iateonline.org](https://iateonline.org)

**FRIDAY, APRIL 29, 2022**

Noon-3:00 PM @ IVCC, Oglesby Campus and Via Zoom  
(link provided upon registration)