

***Thresholds in Education* (ISSN 0196-9641)**

CALL FOR PAPERS

Guest Editors:

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Special Issue: The State of Literacy Education

The Thresholds Story

Thresholds in Education (originally *Thresholds in Secondary Education*) was first published in 1975 by faculty members at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. Their intention was to “explore fresh ideas and viewpoints that may become the pathways to the future,” and for 35 years this venerable journal published four thematic issues a year. In those 35 years, articles by well-known educators and non-educators including Theodore Brameld, Benjamin Spock (yes, Dr. Spock), Linda O’Neil, Bill Ayers, William Schubert, Jan Woodhouse, Deron Boyles, Ming Fang He (to name just a few) appeared in the pages of *Thresholds* doing exactly that: exploring fresh ideas and viewpoints. However, in the face of rising publication costs and the growing contemporary online publication milieu, the last print version of *Thresholds* was published in 2010.

Fast forward to 2014. In discussions between the *Thresholds* Foundation executive board and representatives of the *Academy for Educational Studies*, a plan was hatched: re-launch *Thresholds in Education* as an open access online journal and house it at the *Academy for Educational Studies* web site. In addition to resurrecting *Thresholds*, it was decided that the new *Thresholds* would take on the look, feel, and substance of a slightly more traditional scholarly journal—the original *Thresholds* having had a more “magazine-like,” short-article, look and feel.

With this in mind, the *Thresholds in Education* editorial board, in partnership with the *Academy for Educational Studies*, has recently published issues on the educational impact of COVID-19, critical race theory, and rural educational matters. Future issues include one on contemplative approaches to teaching and learning, and this issue.

Issue Overview

The science of reading. Book bans. Scripted materials. Restrictive policy mandates. The COVID-19 pandemic. The intensified testing and datafication of schools. A teacher exodus. Immigration policy. Attempts of the federal government to erase of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access from all facets of American life. The list goes on. Over the past decade (arguably longer), the field of literacy education has experienced waves of turmoil, pressure, and interruption. The tumultuous experience many educators, literacy educators, teacher educators, learners, families, and communities face continues into today and beyond.

Yet, I see the potential for hope as many work to re-center literacy education in the joy, heart, and belonging that can be constructed through a more critical and humanizing approach to literacy teaching, learning, and leadership.

This special issue seeks to examine the state of literacy education and pursue pathways that may recenter the field in the belonging, empathy, and healing we need both individually and collectively. What is literacy and what does it mean to be literate today? Whose language practices matter? Who gets to define that? Who gets to shape that? What can help and what can hinder language and literacy development in our schools and communities today? What challenges do learners, educators, and leaders face in the current context of literacy education? What barriers limit us? How do we address them? What practices might we take up to engage in the current moment? How do we pursue these practices when challenges might limit us? What is the current state of literacy education?

Possible Areas of Investigation/Analysis for Manuscripts

- Science of Reading
- Censorship (texts, authors, educators, speech)
- Educational materials (including a focus on technology, high quality instructional materials, scripted curricula, etc.)
- Restrictive policy mandates, legislation, and/or local implementation of literacy policy
- Intersections between the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and literacy education
- Intensified testing and datafication of schools
- Erasure of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access
- Literacy education and multilingualism in the current moment
- Pursuits of joy and connection in literacy education
- Critical and/or humanizing approaches to literacy education
- Innovative approaches to literacy teaching in the current context
- Additional topics speaking to the current state of literacy education in communities and schools

* This list is not exhaustive. Please feel free to contact the guest editor if you'd like to see if your work might align with the scope for this call for papers related to the current state of literacy education.

Author Guidelines

Please submit a 500-1,000-word proposal, along with a short bio and contact information for each author by December 1st, 2026 (see submission email address below). The submitted proposal should provide a title, background and context, methodology, key themes and findings, implications and contributions, and 3-5 relevant key words.

Final manuscripts will be 6,000-9,000 words, double-spaced, 12-point font, APA style 7th edition.

Submissions will undergo a blind peer review by at least two reviewers (i.e., one editorial team member, one volunteer reviewer). Submissions to the special issue will be evaluated based on their relevance to the theme and objectives outlined in the call for papers. Manuscripts should demonstrate a clear and substantive connection to the special issue's focus and contribute meaningfully to ongoing scholarly debates or identified gaps in the literature. Preference will be given to papers that offer original contributions through novel theoretical insights, innovative methodologies, new empirical evidence, or fresh interpretations of existing research.

Submissions should engage critically with relevant and up-to-date literature, situating the study within existing scholarship while advancing new perspectives. Clarity of writing and organization are essential: manuscripts should be well structured, clearly argued, and written in an academically appropriate style. Consideration will also be given to how each contribution complements the overall coherence and intellectual diversity of the special issue. Finally, submissions must comply with the journal's formatting, length, citation, and ethical guidelines.

General Timeline

Call for papers: July 1, 2026
Proposals Due: October 31, 2026
Accept/Reject: December 15, 2026
Draft Articles Due: March 15, 2027
Feedback to authors: June 15, 2027
Final Drafts Due: September 15, 2027
Published: Fall 2027

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