



Letter from the President

With the start of a new year, comes unnecessary expectations. Pitched as a time for fresh start to reinvent, renew, and revive ourselves in the middle of the coldest month. The pressure is unrealistic, which is why many fail or outright rebel against anything associated with resolutions, new years, and goals.

Additionally, as teachers, it's not really a start of anything new. That feeling comes in August. By January, we are literally trying to survive the darkest months, inside, cooped up, counting down the days until Spring Break (58 days for those tracking).

This is why the best I can do is lean into a word to ground me, guide me, and give me purpose. It helps that as an English teacher, words happen to be my thing. But a word of the year seems to root me for at least the first few months as I reflect on how I will grow or change, perhaps my theme of the moment.

At ICTE, we are focusing 2025 on **embracing**. We have little control over what we are handed as teachers and learners, but we always have control over how we respond. Instead of running from AI, you will see us host a webinar to embrace and understand its impact. When faced with the



Iowa High School Teacher of Excellence Award

Nikki Smith, Shannon Johnson - award recipient, and Haley Moehlis at the 2023 ICTE Conference

The 2023 award recipient of the ICTE High School Teacher of Excellence Award was Shannon Johnson. She is an incredible teacher, colleague, and friend. She lives out her beliefs in everything she does. Her students adore her for her patience and the natural way she breaks information down. They credit her for their growth as writers. They find interest in Shakespeare because she cultivates opportunities for students to truly see that literature's relevance, both historically and in the present. Her students are absolutely lucky to have her, but her colleagues are even luckier.

The second award presented annually by ICTE at the fall conference is High School Teacher of Excellence, which recognizes someone known for their literacy interactions not only with their students but also the families of those students. This teacher works at staying up on current trends in the profession, including using a rich and varied curriculum in their classroom.

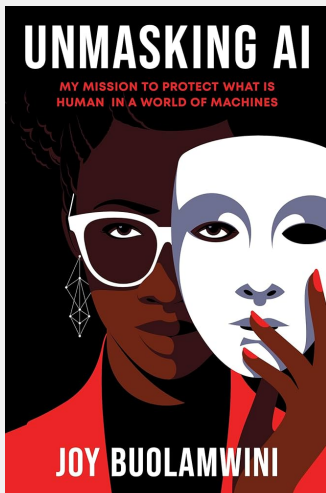
challenges of news literacy in an age of misinformation and conflict, we will embrace keynote speakers who will help us advocate for truth. Though, we will not do it without a little bit of healthy mental escapes, in our Wins and Woes series starting in February.

We are embracing you with us on this journey in 2025, for all the things we know are coming, the things we don't know, and all the things we can't begin to predict. Together, we can accomplish so much.

Nikki Smith
ICTE President

Please consider nominating someone for the 2025 award to be presented October 16th.

Colleen Flathers
Recognition Coordinator



February Book Study: *Unmasking AI*

As part of our **AI and the ELA classroom Webinar Series**, ICTE will be hosting a book study discussing Joy Buolamwini's book, *Unmaking AI*. Buolamwini recently presented at NCTE about her learnings and research with the humanity, and lack of, behind AI.

This book is part memoir and part dissertation as Buolamwini explores the bias and nuances of AI. As we consider how to implement, accept, and embrace AI, this is the perfect fodder for discussion. See also the related documentary, *Coded Bias*, on Netflix.

SAVE THE DATE: February 13th
Book Study, *Unmasking AI*

Upcoming Events





Iowa Council of Teachers of English | iowaenglishteachers@gmail.com | Johnston, IA 50131 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!