



AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR
THEATRE & EDUCATION

research awards

**AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR
THEATRE & EDUCATION
RESEARCH AWARDS POLICY MANUAL**

VERSION 2.1

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Director of Research & Scholarship, 2021-2025

AATE RESEARCH AWARDS POLICY MANUAL

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NOTE: This policy manual was revised from a document published by Matt Omasta in 2014.

RESEARCH AWARDS MISSION, VISION, & TARGET

AATE believes that research in drama/theatre education is essential to support drama/theatre education programs, as such research informs and influences practice and provides essential data necessary for advocacy in the field.

VISION

The Research Awards Committee envisions that AATE's Research Awards will promote:

- Recognition of the value of research in drama/theatre education among AATE's membership and society at large.
- A membership that is better-informed of the theories and practices of drama/theatre and education.
- A healthy drama/theatre education research community.
- AATE's recognition as a world leader in drama/theatre education research.

MISSION

The Research Awards Committee's mission is to:

- Encourage and support research in drama/theatre and education.
- Identify and reward excellence in drama/theatre and education research.
- Develop and deliver programs and activities that provide drama/theatre educators with sound research that can inform their practice along as well as with a sound understanding of research practices.
- Advise the AATE Board of Directors on matters related to research in drama/theatre education.
- Collaborate with AATE's Networks on compatible programs and projects.
- Increase members' knowledge and understanding of the functions of research in the continual development of drama/theatre education.

TARGET

The Research Awards Committee seeks to serve:

- American Alliance for Theatre & Education membership.
- Students of our membership.
- Pre-service and in-service drama/theatre teachers.
- The research community in general (e.g., AERA, IDIERI, IDEA, ASSITEJ, TYA/USA, ITYARN, ASTR, ATHE)

AWARDS

The current awards offered are listed below, and are described in detail later in this handbook:

- The Research Award
- The Distinguished Dissertation Award
- The Distinguished Thesis Award
- The Judith Kase Cooper Honorary Research Award

The Research Awards Chair will submit a list of award winners to the AATE Executive Director annually for inclusion on the AATE website and award presentation at the national conference.

RESEARCH AWARDS PERSONNEL

RESEARCH AWARDS CHAIR

The Research Awards Chair shall be appointed by AATE's Director of Research & Scholarship in consultation with AATE's Board of Directors.

- When feasible, it is ideal for this appointment to take place at least one year in advance of the newly-appointed Chair taking office.
- In order to foster inclusion and diversity, it is recommended that the Research Awards Chair will not hold office for more than four years in a row. The final decision, however, rests with the AATE Board.

RESEARCH AWARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERS / JURORS

The Research Awards Chair will form a committee of recognized practitioners with a variety of research backgrounds and expertise in drama/theatre and education research. The Research Awards Committee Members will also serve as Jurors for at least one award subcommittee.

- All jurors should be established researchers and members in good standing of AATE.
- Historically, former research award finalists make up a large portion of the juries.
- The Research Awards Chair shall attempt to ensure gender, ethnic, racial, national, and international diversity in the selection of jurors.
- Jurors may serve on the subcommittee for one award and still submit their own work for consideration for a different award.
- Jurors may not serve on the subcommittees for an award in cases where doing so could create a real or perceived conflict of interest (e.g., a professor who served on an entrant's dissertation committee may not serve as a juror for the Distinguished Dissertation Award).
- Jurors' identities shall not be revealed by themselves or the Research Awards Chair until the completion of the award process.
- While jurors may serve for an unlimited number of years, in order to foster inclusion and diversity, it is recommended that no juror serve for more than four years in a row.
- At the discretion of the Research Awards Chair, the same set of jurors may jury all awards or the jurors may vary from award to award.
- The Research Awards Committee Members will be listed in the AATE Conference program in alphabetical order, without indication of which award(s) they juried.
- All jurors agree to encourage researchers to enter work for consideration in the Research Awards process and will, as a matter of course, disseminate information about the Research Awards to colleagues and students.

Should circumstances prevent a juror's compliance with these guidelines, the juror must notify the Research Awards Chair immediately.

GENERAL ADJUDICATION GUIDELINES

- All abstracts and manuscripts of complete studies will be distributed to jurors electronically.
- Jurors' written and oral comments should, at all times, be stated in constructive terms. Jurors are critiquing the work of peers and mentoring recent graduate students. Hence, comments should be phrased with tact, sensitivity, and a genuine concern for the researcher's work and professional development as a scholar.
 - The Research Award Chair will tabulate the results and determine the outcome. The Research Awards Chair will submit the tabulated results to the AATE Executive Director.
 - The Research Awards Chair reserves the right to consult with the jurors for any particular award before making a final decision.
- The Research Awards Chair, based on the recommendations of the jury, may offer one award, declare ties / co- winners, offer honorable mentions, or determine that there are no winners for a particular award.
 - The Research Awards Chair acts as an impartial coordinator of the entire jury and awards process. In the interest of fairness to all candidates, the Research Awards Chair does not discuss any study or offer recommendations until the results are submitted. In cases of an irreconcilable tie or extremely close results, after deliberation with the jurors, the Research Awards Chair may cast the deciding vote.
- The Research Awards Chair will notify finalists of the results as soon as possible.
 - Awardees are invited to present their research online and will receive an invitation for the awards ceremony.

ADVOCACY

The Research Awards Committee will submit announcements of its award programs to appropriate educational and theatrical publications where their readerships may be conducting research in drama/theatre and education and / or through electronic list-serves or other appropriate means.

The Research Awards Chair will send the research awards announcements in ample time to meet publication deadlines.

The Research Awards Chair will submit for publication the names of the award finalists and recipients to the AATE Executive Director for inclusion in all AATE publications.

RESEARCH AWARDS GOVERNANCE

All AATE awards pertaining to research will be determined by the Research Awards Committee with approval of the AATE Board of Directors.

- Guidelines for each award will be reviewed annually and the Research Awards Chair will make revisions and notify all jurors of the new procedures. These will become part of the AATE Research Committee Policy and Procedures Manual.
- Criteria for each award will be reviewed annually and the Research Awards Chair will make revisions and notify all submitters of the new criteria. These will become part of the Research Awards Committee Policy and Procedures Manual.
- The Research Awards Committee may meet formally at the Annual Conference, or by electronic means.
- All committee members (including the Chair) may make motions and vote on changes to Research Awards Policies & Procedures.
- Final approval of changes to Research Awards Policies & Procedures rests with the AATE Board of Directors.
- The Research Awards Chair may recommend changes in policy to the Board throughout the year. The Research Awards Chair will poll the Research Awards Committee prior to forwarding these recommendations.
- Each year all jurors will receive a link to the most recent copy of the Research Awards Policy Manual.

RESEARCH AWARDS CHAIR GENEALOGY

Joyce Wilkinson

Jeanne Klein

Joe Norris, 1995-1996

Laura McCammon, 1996-1998

Johnny Saldaña, 1998-2000

Manon van de Water, 2000-2002

Christine D. Warner, 2004-2009

Manon van de Water, 2007-2009

Gustave Weltsek-Medina, 2009-2010

Lorenzo Garcia, 2010-2012

Matt Omasta, 2012-2015

Mary McAvoy, 2015-2020

Joshua Streeter & Andrew Waldron, 2021-2022

Deen Rawlins-Harris, 2023-2024

Roxanne Schroeder-Arce & Nigel Semaj,
2025-present

RESEARCH AND DISTINGUISHED DISSERTATION / THESIS AWARD OVERVIEW

The American Alliance for Theatre & Education's **Research Award** and **The Distinguished Dissertation & Thesis Awards** are offered annually for significant theoretical, empirical, ethnographic, critical, historical, or other scholarly research in any area of drama/theatre for young people. The purpose of the awards is to encourage novice and senior researchers to strive for excellence; to receive constructive critiques from established researchers; and to increase the prestige, caliber, and recognition of laudable research in the field of drama/theatre. Awardees' summary papers are frequently published in the *Youth Theatre Journal*. Recipients of the awards are invited to present their research at the annual AATE conference.

ELIGIBILITY

1. Award consideration is open to any individual (or collaborative team, for *Research Award* only) in any discipline engaged in drama/theatre research with young people. Open to members or non-members of AATE.
2. Entrants for the *Research Award* may not submit more than one study per year.
3. An individual may not be a finalist for the *Research Award* more than three times in a ten-year period.
4. Entrants for the *Distinguished Dissertation/Thesis Award* may submit their dissertations or theses within four years of their completion.
5. Research should address or identify any research, policy, or practice issues in drama with children, drama/theatre education, or theatre for young audiences. Potential topics include but are not limited to:
 - a. drama or theatre education for young people (preschool through grade 12; or in higher education)
 - b. theatre for young audiences, youth theatre, or similar professional companies in the United States and abroad
 - c. playwriting by, with, or for youth
 - d. educational theory, methods, and curriculum
 - e. drama with, by, and for racially and/or ethnically diverse populations, neurodiverse populations, etc.
 - f. film and television for youth
 - g. historical studies
6. Entrants assume all responsibility for submitting electronic copies of their studies and other requested materials to the Research Awards Chair by the advertised deadlines.
7. All entrants remain anonymous to each other and to the jurors through the award selection process. Only award recipients' names will be publicized.
8. If only one study is received in any given year for any award, the Research Awards Chair may recommend that no award be given and that the submission be considered for the following year's award. If, for the *Distinguished Dissertation/Thesis Award*, the four-year completion eligibility will be affected by this, though, the study shall proceed in the current year.

SUBMISSION

Authors should submit the following materials to the Research Awards Chair by [e-mail](#):

1. A cover page indicating the author's name, affiliation, address, phone number, e-mail address, study title and (for theses/dissertation) the name and contact information of the committee chairperson
2. A 1,200-1,500 word abstract of the master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or research report, accompanied by a 2-page representative bibliography. The abstract **must NOT include any identifying information** related to the author or their affiliation(s).
3. For theses and dissertations: a letter from the chairperson of the student's committee recommending the study for consideration.
4. The complete master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or research report as a PDF. The research completed document **must NOT include any identifying information** related to the author or their affiliation(s).

Each of the above should be attached as *separate files* to a single message and e-mailed to researchawards@aate.com. Only electronic submissions in MS Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format will be accepted.

All complete studies must be submitted in a standard publication style format such as MLA, APA, or Chicago. *For Distinguished Dissertation & Thesis Awards*, all studies must be submitted as originally written and approved by the degree granting institution.

The study abstract should address explicitly as many of the following as are applicable, preferably in this order: (a) objectives or purpose; (b) perspective(s) or theoretical framework; (c) methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry; (d) data sources or evidence; (e) results and/or conclusions/point of view; and (f) educational or theoretical importance of the study.

AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Each Award Recipient **will be expected** to make a 20-minute prepared presentation of their research as described in the summary paper—either at the AATE annual conference or on video (subject to the conference schedule). This presentation may be read verbatim from a prepared text or presented extemporaneously within the given time frame. Generally, an effective presentation includes a concise overview of the entire study with additional commentary/reflection on the study as time allows.

Presentations may be accompanied with audio-visual material (e.g. PowerPoint slides) if appropriate. All presentations should be framed as if the audience is hearing about the study for the very first time.

Each finalist is encouraged to prepare a **10-25 page research paper of the complete study** for submission to *Youth Theatre Journal* (see "Submissions of Research Papers" below).

If research presentations are scheduled during the annual conference, they will be followed by questions from

the audience.

Award finalists are encouraged to make personal arrangements for attending the annual AATE conference for the award ceremony. For further details regarding conference registration and housing, see AATE.com.

AATE does not pay for special audio-visual equipment used in any presentation. Notify the Research Awards Chair of your presentation needs and the chair will convey this to the conference committee. Also, AATE does not cover any travel costs related to this presentation. By submitting their materials for review, Research Award nominees consent to the release of their names and contact information for publicity and publication purposes should they receive an award.

SUBMISSIONS TO YOUTH THEATRE JOURNAL

Research Award nominees are encouraged to submit 10-25 page articles based on their research papers to *Youth Theatre Journal* for potential publication. Papers must be submitted to the editor in the proper format for publication consideration. [See *Youth Theatre Journal* guidelines](#) for details regarding manuscript submissions.

TIMELINE

The timeline for the awards process is determined by the Research Awards Chair and may change annually, however, a recommended timeline is below:

- All submissions must be received by 11:59pm PST on **March 31**
- Authors will be notified by **April 16** as to if their submission will be advanced to full review for the award.
- Finalists will be notified of award decisions by **June 1**
- Award winners and (if applicable) authors receiving honorable mentions will celebrate their research at the annual AATE conference in **July**

RESEARCH AND DISTINGUISHED DISSERTATION / THESIS AWARD ADJUDICATION GUIDELINES

ROUND I

The research award chair(s) will review each submission in order to ensure that all required items have been submitted, that the study was completed within the current award period, and that the study falls within the scope of AATE's research awards as outlined above and reiterated here:

Research should address or identify any research, policy, or practice issues in drama with children, drama/theatre education, or theatre for young audiences. Potential topics include but are not limited to:

- drama or theatre education for young people (preschool through grade 12; or in higher education)
- theatre for young audiences, youth theatre, or similar professional companies in the United States and abroad
- playwriting by, with, or for youth
- educational theory, methods, and curriculum
- drama with, by, and for racially and/or ethnically diverse populations, neurodiverse populations, etc.
- film and television for youth
- historical studies

If the research award chair(s) accepts the nomination, the author will be notified that their work is either going forward for full consideration or that the chair is rejecting the nomination.

ROUND II

Reviewers will complete this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/4C8jkstr9tqYLmi88>

In the form, reviewers will rate each of the following items according to a 5 point scale:

Innovation and Significance
Critical Orientation
Research Methods, Techniques, or Modes of Inquiry
Perspectives or Theoretical Framing
Document Structure and Narrative

The reviewers will then respond to each of the following questions:

- What is novel or innovative about this work? What sets this research apart from other theses or dissertations that you have read?
- If a piece of the work was to be published, what would you recommend and why?

- What did you find most effective? Where would there be room to grow?

The Research Awards Chair will tabulate the results from the jurors and determine the award winners and/or honorable mentions, consulting with the jurors if necessary (e.g. in the case of a tie or very close results).

JUDITH KASE COOPER HONORARY RESEARCH AWARD OVERVIEW

The American Alliance for Theatre & Education's Judith Kase Cooper Honorary Research Award is given to honor distinguished scholars who have contributed significantly to the development of theory and research in the field of drama/theatre and education. The nominee's collective works can be theoretical, empirical, ethnographic, critical, historical, or other scholarly research in any area of drama/theatre for young people.

1. Any AATE member may submit a nomination for consideration.
2. Those nominated must be individuals who, either working independently or in collaboration with others, have made significant contributions to the body of research in drama/theatre education internationally.
3. The focus of the award is on cumulative work accomplished over a number of years rather than on one study.
4. Those nominated must be recommended by at least 3 established researchers (nominators) within AATE and at least 1 established researcher outside the field.
5. Nominators must submit an abbreviated curriculum vitae of themselves indicating their own research history in the field of drama/theatre and education.
6. One of the nominators will compile a dossier of the individual nominated which must include a list of research publications and activities. It may include teaching history, presentations made, positions held, and research grants received.
7. The nominee may or may not be aware of the nomination.
8. All nominations will be held in confidence by the Research Awards Chair and jurors. The nominators will be informed of the results by the Research Awards Chair.
9. It is the responsibility of the Research Awards Chair to inform the recipient of the award. This will include the names of the individuals who made the nomination. The recipient is offered a complimentary ticket to the AATE Awards Event (e.g., luncheon, ceremony).
10. Only successful recipients will be contacted.
11. All nomination materials must be submitted by the advertised deadline.

JUDITH KASE COOPER HONORARY RESEARCH AWARD ADJUDICATION GUIDELINES

This award is given at the discretion of the jury. They may apply as many criteria as they deem necessary to determine the extent the individual nominated has over a large number of years significantly contributed to the development of theory and research in the field of drama/theatre and education.

Below is a list of some criteria which may assist them in their decision.

- Credibility of the nominators based upon their abbreviated CV's.
- Number of publications of the nominee.
- Substantive contributions to the field by the nominee's works.
- Duration of research activities of the nominee.
- Research related grants and awards received by the nominee.



research awards

This award is not meant to be competitive. If more than one nomination is received in any given year, the jury may present more than one award or choose to offer one award in a subsequent year.

APPENDIX A: Sample Research Award Evaluation Form

Please read the study abstract, and then complete each of the three sections below.

SECTION 1: Quantitative Scoring

Please rate the study in each of the factors below using the following scale.

- 5 = Excellent
- 4 = Good
- 3 = Average
- 2 = Fair
- 1 = Poor

CRITERIA/RATING	SCORE
Document Structure and Narrative	
Critical Orientation	
Research Methods, Techniques, or Modes of Inquiry	
Perspectives or Theoretical Framing	
Innovation and Significance	
TOTAL SCORE	0

SECTION 2: Required Narrative Feedback

These three responses will be sent as feedback to the author.

What is novel or innovative about this work? What sets this research apart from other theses or dissertations that you have read?

If a piece of the work was to be published, what would you recommend and why?

What did you find most effective and why? Where would there be room to grow?

SECTION 3: Optional Additional Feedback

Please provide feedback on any or all of the categories from the quantitative categories: document structure and narrative, critical orientation, research methods/techniques/modes of inquiry, perspectives or theoretical framing, or innovation and significance. These comments will be shared with the author.

Final Comments (Optional) to the Research Awards Chair (These will NOT be shared with the entrant)

APPENDIX B: Sample Call for Submissions (Research Awards)

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR THEATRE AND EDUCATION

invites submissions for the

2025 AATE RESEARCH AWARDS

THE RESEARCH AWARD

THE DISTINGUISHED DISSERTATION AWARD

THE DISTINGUISHED THESIS AWARD

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2025

AATE's research awards are offered annually to scholars whose research contributes significantly to the field of drama/theatre with or for young people. We welcome submissions from a wide variety of research traditions that explore any topic related to educational theatre / drama, applied theatre, and/or theatre for young audiences.

ELIGIBILITY

- Open to members or non-members of AATE.
- Theses and dissertations may be entered up to four years from their date of completion (This year, theses and dissertations completed between November 2021-November 2024 are eligible for submission).

SUBMISSION

Authors should submit the following materials to the Research Awards Chair by [e-mail](#):

1. A cover page indicating the author's name, affiliation, address, phone number, e-mail address, study title and (for theses/dissertation) the name and contact information of the committee chairperson
2. A 1,200-1,500 word abstract of the master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or research report, accompanied by a 2-page representative bibliography. The abstract **must NOT include any identifying information** related to the author or their affiliation(s).
3. For theses and dissertations: a letter from the chairperson of the student's committee recommending the study for consideration.
4. The complete master's thesis, doctoral dissertation, or research report as a PDF. The research completed document **must NOT include any identifying information** related to the author or their affiliation(s).

Each of the above should be attached as *separate files* to a single message and e-mailed to researchawards@aate.com. Only electronic submissions in MS Word (.docx) or PDF format will be accepted.

All complete studies must be submitted in a standard publication style format such as MLA, APA, or Chicago. *For Distinguished Dissertation & Thesis Awards*, all studies must be submitted as originally written and approved by the degree granting institution.

The study abstract should address explicitly as many of the following as are applicable, preferably in this order: (a) objectives or purpose; (b) perspective(s) or theoretical framework; (c) methods, techniques, or modes of inquiry; (d) data sources or evidence; (e) results and/or conclusions/point of view; and (f) educational or theoretical importance of the study.

REVIEW TIMELINE

- All submissions must be received by 11:59pm PST on **March 31, 2025**.
- Authors will be notified by **April 16, 2025** as to if their submission will be advanced to full review for the award.
- Finalists will be notified of award decisions by **June 1, 2025**. Award winners and (if applicable) authors receiving honorable mentions will celebrate their research at the annual AATE conference in Cleveland in July 2025.
- We invite all nominees to submit an article based on their research to the *Youth Theatre Journal* for potential publication.

Send all electronic submissions and requests for further information to:

Jonathan P. Jones, PhD
Director, AATE Research & Scholarship
researchawards@aate.com

APPENDIX C: Sample Call for Submissions (Judith Kase Cooper Award)

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE FOR THEATRE AND EDUCATION

invites nominations for the

2025 JUDITH KASE COOPER HONORARY RESEARCH AWARD

NOMINATION DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2025

The **AATE Judith Kase Cooper Honorary Research Award** is given to honor distinguished scholars who have contributed significantly to the development of theory and research in the field of drama/theatre and education. Nominees must have made significant contributions to the body of research in drama/theatre education internationally. The focus of the award is on cumulative work accomplished over a number of years rather than on one study.

NOMINATION PROCESS

Current AATE members may begin the nomination process by e-mailing the Research Awards Chair at researchawards@aate.com by **March 31, 2025** to indicate their intent to nominate a candidate for this award. The chair will provide nominators with detailed nomination guidelines by **April 15, 2025**.

A complete nomination package will consist of a minimum of four letters of support testifying to the nominee's significant international impact on the field's research. At least three letters must be from AATE members with established research reputations; at least one must be from an established scholar whose primary area of inquiry lies outside the field of theatre education or theatre for young audiences. Additional required materials and the deadline for their receipt will be provided upon receipt of the intent to nominate e-mail.

The nominee may or may not be aware of the nomination. The Research Award Chair and jurors will hold all nominations in confidence. The nominators will be informed of the results by the Research Award Chair.

Send all electronic submissions and requests for further information to:

Jonathan P. Jones, PhD
Director, AATE Research & Scholarship
researchawards@aate.com