

Welcome and Introduction to the Fall 2015 Issue of Kaleidoscope



We are pleased to publish our third issue of *Kaleidoscope: Educator Voices and Perspectives*. What was once a gleam in the eye of our Senior Fellows has blossomed into our very own grassroots, KSTF-flavored corner of the world of educational literature.

This year we've published articles on the unique experiences of teaching in Tanzania and writing letters to students' future selves. Fellows have tackled the art of multi-disciplinary environmental projects and how to bring KSTF into their schools. They've articulated the phases of engineering and mused about the challenges of leaving the classroom in order to move into school leadership roles. As the editorial board reflects on the stellar articles published in the last two issues, two things immediately become clear: First, that the journal's budding vision of sharing the knowledge and insight gained through our work in KSTF's

unique professional network and providing substantive and reflective writing that is informed by our classroom practices and collaborative inquiry has taken hold in a wonderful and creative way. And, second, that we are proud of this community of educators for having so much wisdom to offer the world of teacher education. Without further ado, welcome to the Fall 2015 issue of *Kaleidoscope: Educator Voices and Perspectives*. We proudly encourage readers to share this issue with teachers, students, and anyone else who is interested in education. If you have any comments or questions, please contact us at kaleidoscope@knowlesteachers.org.

INTRODUCTION

As teachers, we ask our students to take risks, to admit to uncertainty, to expose themselves as vulnerable in front of their peers—all in the pursuit of improving their understanding of the world around them. In writing the four articles presented in this issue, our authors make themselves vulnerable to our readers, through their stories of challenges accepted, mistakes made, and lessons learned. Through their writing, they open their classrooms and invite us all to share in their new understandings of our profoundly influential role as educators.

KSTF Senior Fellow Kelsey Johnson shares a lesson her students taught her about staying true to optimism through embodying a gratitude mindset. Her message transcends classroom outlooks and challenges us to re-engage in the promise of bright futures.

KSTF Senior Fellow Heather Buskirk found herself knee-deep in an engineering project on snowshoes after winter blew in to her physics course in February. Heather recounts how she tied engineering design to physics, math, and project-based learning to offer her students the challenge of the season.

2012 KSTF Teaching Fellow Tanya LaMar connects her personal struggle of evolving academic identity to resources that could benefit students who are dealing with similar identity issues. Tanya's story resonates for college-bound students and other students who feel conflict over decisions to stray from the norm of their communities.

KSTF Senior Fellows Kristin Germinario, Sarah Hawthorne and Laura Nutter were inspired to use 5 Practices (5P) instruction in their biology classes. Following successful attempts in their individual classrooms, they found opportunities for sharing their methodologies with local and national teacher groups, all the while increasing their personal understandings of the strength of 5P.