

From the Editor

---

# RECONNECT, RECHARGE, AND REACH YOUR AUDIENCE WITH KATE

---

July 2020

Dear Readers,

After the pandemic-related challenges of the 2020-2021 academic year, I hope you are enjoying a rejuvenating summer. The [Kansas Association of Teachers of English \(KATE\)](#) has opportunities to help you reconnect and recharge, including virtual book clubs and two beloved KATE events that are back in 2021:

## July 20 – [KATE Camp 2021](#)

This half-day online event is FREE and features teacher-generated breakout sessions as well as a mindfulness workshop. Learn more and register today at <https://www.kansasenglish.org/kate-summer-camp.html>.



## November 5-6 – [KATE Fall Annual Conference](#)

The in-person conference returns in 2021 and features incredible keynote speakers, including [bestselling YA author Samira Ahmed](#) and [award-winning storyteller Laura Packer](#). Consider submitting [a proposal for a breakout session](#) by August 13. Learn more and register today at <https://www.kansasenglish.org/fall-conference.html>.



Samira Ahmed



Laura Packer

## Reach your audience: Publication opportunities for you and your students

In addition to these energizing KATE events, consider these publication opportunities for you and your students. Check out [Voices of Kansas](#), and encourage your students to submit their creative and scholarly work (deadline Jan. 31, 2022). This is a powerful opportunity for your students to write for an authentic audience and possibly get published. And **YOU** should consider submitting your work for publication on the [KATE Blog](#) (featured on KATE's award-winning website) or in [Kansas English](#), which won a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Affiliate Journal of Excellence Award in 2020.

## In this issue ...

We have some exciting and enlightening contributions from teachers and scholars in the 2021 issue of *Kansas English*, and I am grateful for the gifts of their writing in the midst of the uncertainty and hardships caused by the global pandemic.

First, **Hannah Schoonover** discusses the importance of accurate and positive representations of disability in children's literature and highlights examples of five books that exemplify these qualities.

Next, **Deborah Eades McNemee** invites us into her writing classroom by describing her essay and story-starter practice strategies for helping students develop confidence and take risks in their composing.

Three poems by **Beth Gulley** grace this issue, encouraging us to pause, reflect on what we have learned (and taught) over the past year, and attend to the small wonders and joys that become more apparent the closer we look.

With his former English teacher **Steven Maack**, **Alex Tretbar** describes his experiences leading a poetry and fiction study group while incarcerated in Oregon, sharing teaching and learning experiences that are common across instructional settings.

Exploring timeless themes of collaboration, mob rule, and law and order, **William Sewell** advocates for the pairing of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* with a classic YA book *Downriver* by Will Hobbs and describes a variety of instructional strategies that complement this pairing.

**Melissa D. Reed** and **Heather C. Caswell** argue that teaching empathy is the key to creating a learning environment that promotes authenticity, and they provide instructional strategies for doing so, alongside thematically-organized lists of children's and YA books that depict empathy.

And throughout this issue are young adult (YA) book reviews from **Sharon K. Wilson**, **Lindsey Viets**, **Sydney Nesvold**, and **John Franklin**. Each book has been published within the past five years and would be a worthwhile addition to your classroom library.

Please enjoy this issue of *Kansas English*, and consider participating in the professional conversation by [submitting your own work for the 2022 issue!](#)

Until next time, happy teaching and learning!

*Katherine Mason Cramer*