

Undergraduate Kayleigh Kearsley Presents at National Conference

01/09/2026



Last spring, English Teaching undergraduate Kayleigh Kearsley was able to attend the Utah Council for Teachers of English annual conference and immediately knew she wanted to go to the national convention.

“Through that one day of keynote speakers, workshops, and networking, I walked away with a variety of new resources, research-supported teaching strategies, and several new connections to explore moving forward,” Kayleigh comments. “With the help of Dr. Taylor Rose-Dougherty, I was able to not only attend but present at this national convention.”

The 2025 NCTE convention took place in Denver, Colorado, at the end of November, uniting educators from around the country dedicated to the improvement of the processes of teaching and learning English at all levels. Kayleigh presented in the “Future is Now” session, which was built around preservice teachers and their research. Her presentation was entitled “Incorporating Texts with People with Disabilities in a Scripted Curriculum.”

“Through my research, I discovered that people with disabilities aren’t often represented in classroom texts,” she notes. “My presentation suggested that even with the rise of scripted curricula, a teacher’s agency is still present and vital to ensure all of our students feel welcome in the classroom by seeing themselves in the texts read in the classroom.”

Kayleigh expressed how the conference allowed her to learn creative, research-supported ways to foster a welcoming environment in a classroom community. “From decentering grades to incorporating neurodivergent characters to using graphic novels in the classroom, NCTE had it all,” Kayleigh says.

The experience also provided networking opportunities that Kayleigh found encouraging and influential. “Being in a space with passionate English educators and learning from their research and innovative strategies was inspiring,” she reflects. “I look forward to applying the different strategies and tools discovered through this conference as I step into student teaching this spring.”

Kayleigh was recently awarded the English Teaching Student of the Year for the department, demonstrating her commitment to learning and applying new strategies to foster inclusion and community in the classroom.