



FAST FACTS

Name: Kristal Doolin

Role: 7th-Grade Language Arts Teacher

District: Corbin Middle School, Corbin, KY

Challenge: Keeping her classroom fresh, alive and motivated with engaging content.

Solution: *Inanimate Alice*, a digital-born novel and transmedia literary experience.

Results: Engaged students building digital, media, visual, informational and critical literacies.

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A Transmedia Experience for All Students

A passionate teacher finds an innovative solution that goes above and beyond, engaging her students in an unforgettable storytelling experience.



Leading Edge. *In award-winning educator Kristal Doolin's classroom, innovation is the norm. "The moment I viewed the first episode, I knew this was it," says Doolin of Inanimate Alice.*

Kristal Doolin is a National Board Certified 7th grade language arts teacher at Corbin Middle School in Corbin, Kentucky. A veteran of the classroom, she has 16 years of experience and was named the 2013 Kentucky Teacher of the Year. She is constantly on the lookout for new and innovative ways to challenge and motivate students. She recently discovered *Inanimate Alice*, an online, multimedia "novel" that is proving to be an exciting new way forward in teaching language arts. "I have loved reading and writing since I was young," she comments. "I love words and that is what led me to become a language arts teacher in the first place. I see my mission as a teacher of giving my students their best year of language arts ever."

She prides herself on building a community in her classroom by embracing technology as both a motivator and an integral part of a students' future. "Our classrooms should be living spaces," she says, "growing and changing as needed with lessons always ready for the revision required to fit the needs of my audience of students."

Her deep appreciation for the growing role of technology in learning combined with her commitment to keeping students engaged with fresh and lively stories has drawn her to a unique and compelling new form of storytelling exemplified by *Inanimate Alice*, a digital, multimedia novel published by the BradField Company of London.

Multiple Possibilities

Inanimate Alice is an innovative, part-game, part-movie transliteracy education resource. It is a vivid storytelling project that marries text with sound, movie and gaming elements to create an experiential story crafted to build digital literacy skills for today's youth. In this digital-born story, readers are transported into the world of Alice Field, a globetrotting girl who wants to be a game designer. Students who read – or "experience" – her story engage with Alice in a variety of ways that help build digital, media, visual, informational, and critical literacies – a practice that is called transliteracy education.

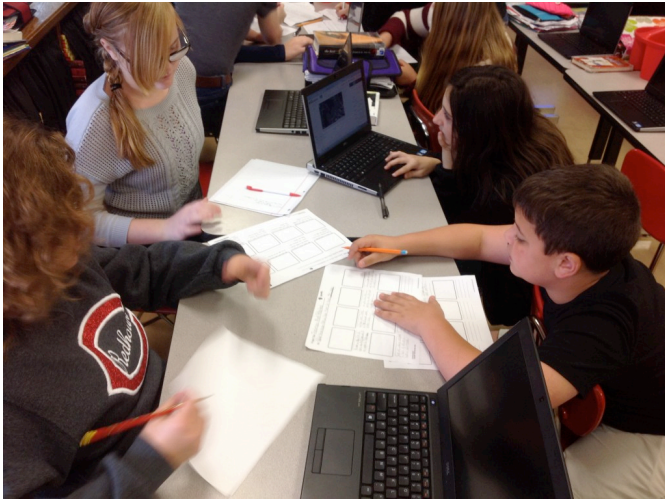
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A Digital-Born Transmedia Experience for Students Everywhere



“They are more tuned in to extras, like artwork and music in reference to what we are studying. *Alice* has them thinking beyond the words now.”

—Kristal Doolin, Language Arts Teacher, Corbin Middle School, Corbin, KY



“I came across the transmedia concept when reading articles online as part of my own curiosity and research during the summer,” says Doolin. “I’m always on the lookout for new ideas – especially involving technology. *Inanimate Alice* struck me as an interesting concept. I wanted something new to open the year with and the moment I viewed the first episode, I knew this was it. *Inanimate Alice* offers tremendous potential for aligning our teaching with Common Core state standards and generating discussions that take us further than the typical read.”

Doolin found herself drawn to the multiple possibilities that the project brought to teaching and learning – not just language arts, but much more. “I basically looked at what elements of instruction I could cover with each episode,” she notes, “and then the students took it from there. Each day was a new highlight. The kids came in excited to work. They were eager to find out what happened in each episode and were eager to discuss it.”

Part of what makes *Inanimate Alice* special, according to Doolin, “is the transmedia aspect of this story. Each episode is multi-layered,” she explains. “Just when we think we have finished, we find another layer is waiting. Students connect with the interactive style and with Alice herself. For teachers...there are so many options for this within Common Core – analysis especially. I can discuss everything from character development to point of view to figurative language.”

Into It. Working with *Inanimate Alice* has pushed this Language Arts classroom above and beyond the normal curriculum to a transliteracy experience engaging every student in deeper learning.

Doolin observes that this approach motivates students to share and bounce ideas off of each other. “I’m always blown away by how much they see,” she notes. “They approach it as a puzzle — slowly coming together to reveal a piece of art. Having read *Alice*, students are more willing to dive into something new now. They are more tuned in to extras, like artwork and music in reference to what we are studying. *Alice* has them thinking beyond the words now.”

A Universal Story

Doolin believes that having a 1-to-1 (student-to-device ratio) classroom, makes this form of teaching and learning especially strong. “Technology and education/instruction go hand in hand,” she says. With this approach, technology is embedded in good instruction. It engages the kids and helps teachers comply with common core objectives. I hope other teachers will try this exciting new way of teaching. It is different, but it is a ‘good’ different. The content captivates and motivates students and brings creativity back to learning.”

Doolin describes *Inanimate Alice* as a universal story with the power to engage students of all abilities and nationalities. “Students learn a lot from Alice,” she continues. “Alice has traveled widely from an early age and she is sympathetic to the plight of others. Alice is a champion of information and communication technology and the empowerment of girls. Her multicultural, multi-lingual take on the world and her drive to become a multimedia artist make her a character of compelling interest to all students.”

Thousands of ‘early-adopting’ teachers across the U.S. are already using *Inanimate Alice*. They share Doolin’s appreciation of the story, the multimedia presentation, and the powerful concept of transliteracy education. “I am definitely a fan,” Doolin says. “I have loved watching students discover new ideas and discuss them, while I work as a facilitator rather than the keeper of knowledge. For me, that is priceless.” ■

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