



Kentucky Literacy Link

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Special points of interest:

- Get involved in the Kentucky Literacy Celebration
- Spotlight on Russell and Mason counties
- A HEAP of resources

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For The Love of Literacy: A Note from the Editor

My love of literacy started long before I became a teacher. As a child, my favorite things to do were read and write. My mother would force me to go outside and “be normal,” but I’d still risk punishment and smuggle books out under my shirts. During summers with my grandparents, I devoured the hundreds of romance novels that stocked my grandmother’s bookshelves and wrote a few romances of my own. At age 8, I announced that I was going to be a famous writer one day. I would live alone in a cabin in the woods where I would sit in my papasan chair with my typewriter and produce brilliant novels from my tortured soul. I could see myself in a room with three walls of bookshelves and one of glass (for gazing thoughtfully out at nature for inspiration), typing furiously and tediously. I did not dream of marriage and children, for there would be no time with all the classics to be written! No, it would be just me and my typewriter and my string of lovers (those romance novels had their influence). Literacy would be my greatest love. Though my vision has changed quite a bit, the love remains. My

concern, however, is that we don’t inspire that kind of love in our students anymore. Writing is too often a chore, prescribed and contained within boundaries of 3.5 essays and contrived prompts. Our students have plenty to say, why don’t they want to (or why aren’t they allowed to) say it in writing?

Strong written communication is a key skill for college and/or career readiness. We teach writing not to prepare for a test, but to prepare for life. Of course you have to prepare students for assessments, and we understand the pressures of accountability. Students should receive practice in timed situations with writing prompts so that they can learn to respond effectively to writing situations for a variety of real-life audiences and purposes (such as interview situations) as well as for assessment purposes. However, good writing instruction remains the key to producing strong writers. As stated in KDE’s *Addressing Three Modes of Writing Kentucky Core Academic Standards in the 21st Century: Tips for Understanding Standards, Instruction & Assessment*: “Your

students need time to write their hearts out; to explore many different subjects; to write deeply about a single one. They need to write for the fun of it, and at times they need coaches by their sides stretching them to write with more precision and craft” (p. 109). Fletcher and Portalupi (2001) further stress that when students are provided instruction alongside many opportunities to write, “students will perform as desired on assessments.”

Within this issue you will find real classroom examples of teachers harnessing their students’ creativity and engaging them meaningfully in the writing process. You also will find suggestions and resources to help you do the same. Hopefully, you will find something valuable, something you can use today, something that will spark the love of literacy in a child.

MK Hardaway is a KDE literacy consultant and the editor of this publication. Contact her at kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov.



Upcoming Literacy Webinars

In March and April we will be hosting a set of webinars to support district and school literacy planning. The webinars also introduce the release of the Literacy Central website.

Webinar I- Literacy Plan-

ning for School Improvement
March 8 & 13 (3:30-4:30 p.m. ET)

Webinar II- Professional Development
March 26 (3-4 p.m. ET) & 29

(3:30-4:30 p.m. ET)

Webinar III- Instruction and Intervention
April 9 & 16 (3:00-4:00 p.m. ET)

To register, please e-mail jackie.rogers@education.ky.gov.

Classroom Spotlight: Russell County Middle School

Jennifer Hardwick certainly found a way to tap into the love of writing and actively engage her students in the writing process. These students honed valuable 21st-century communication skills, including utilizing multiple media and technologies. The strong connection to character education and students' personal lives certainly taught them valuable lessons and made the project memorable.

Relevant Standards:
W 2, 4, 5, 6
SL 4, 5, 6

At Russell County Middle School, "character words" are introduced each month to help encourage the development of admirable character traits that the students, faculty and staff strive to emulate. With the need to supplement character education in the school, 8th-grade English teacher Jennifer Hardwick used the character words as a basis for themes in journal writing for her classes. In October, the character word for the month was

"courage." She located video clips and text that expressed true stories of courage, including those of Dakota Meyer (Medal of Honor winner from Kentucky), Randy Pausch (*The Last Lecture*), Rachel Joy Scott (Columbine shooting victim – Rachel's Challenge), Nando Parrado (Andes airplane crash survivor) and Patrick Hughes (wheelchair-bound University of Louisville marching band member). After they journaled for the month, Hardwick assigned an informative writing task and an accompanying project that would be a visual or audio representation of the story or person that they chose from the journal prompts. Each student was allowed to choose a writing format, but had to include a narrative of the individual the student chose to focus on. Students chose a variety of formats, including scripts, essays and articles. Then, they were given a multitude of options for their accompanying project including creating song lyrics, a Facebook page for the

individual, a Twitter account, a PowerPoint presentation, a t-shirt design, a sketch/drawing, a painting, video or other item.

The students certainly rose to the occasion for this project. They chose writing formats that best suited their own personal writing strengths and personal preferences. The scripts especially stood out as being the most difficult format to complete, but also the format in which students were most passionate about excelling. The accompanying projects were enthusiastically completed with amazing talent and perseverance. Some examples that stood out were a movie a student created about his mother, who had donated a kidney to a local woman; a papier-mâché model of the airplane crash in the Andes Mountains; a song written and performed by a student about Martin Luther King Jr.; a painting depicting Rosa Parks; and a re-creation of Rachel Joy Scott's personal journal. The



projects were presented to the class on the due date, affording them the opportunity to practice public speaking skills. Grades were extraordinarily superior for this project compared to other writing tasks. Many of these projects will be displayed for the first annual "Russell County Middle School Showcase," which will be held March 1 for the parents and community members to witness for themselves the talents of our amazing students.

Jennifer Hardwick is an 8th-grade English teacher at Russell County Middle School. She has taught English/language arts and social studies for the past 11 years.

Kentucky Literacy Celebration: March 5-9

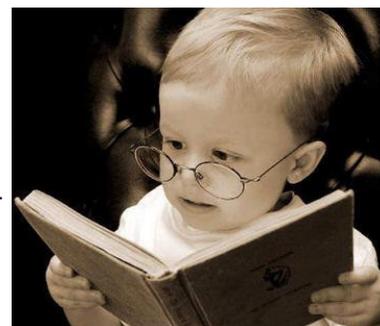
The Kentucky Literacy Celebration (KLC) is a result of collaboration among several literacy/education institutions and Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear. The intent of the event is to highlight literacy in Kentucky, celebrate the accomplishments and focus on the challenges we still face as a state. The week of March 5 through March 9 has been set aside for this second annual statewide event. The week will be marked by a number of activities and announcements. The First Lady will be traveling across the state to visit

schools, adult education centers, libraries, communities and businesses. Links providing the First Lady's schedule along with a list of statewide celebration events will be available on the "Events" tab at <http://www.kentuckyliteracy.org/celebrate2012>.

The KLC Week began in 2011 with the intent of focusing on Kentucky's achievements in literacy as well as highlighting challenges we still face as a state. Governor Steve Beshear issued a recurring proclamation about this unique event. Multi-

ple partners and supporters are pulling together again this year to celebrate Kentucky and literacy.

All of Kentucky's citizens are invited to join by participating in or hosting a literacy-related activity. Schools and educational entities may plan events for their students and staff to highlight literacy. Libraries may spotlight books and authors. Communities and businesses may sponsor an activity that brings awareness



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Interview with an Author: Vicky Layne - Part One

Through the lens of the book she co-authored with Ellen McIntyre and Nancy Hulan *Reading Instruction for Diverse Classrooms: Research-based, Culturally Responsive Practice (Solving Problems in the Teaching of Literacy)*, author Vicky Layne shared her thoughts on a number of pertinent issues with KDE literacy consultant Synthia Shelby.

How do you engage other partners (family members and caregivers) in the literacy development of your students? What is your evidence?

Our families are vital to the success of our students. Effective communication with them is of the utmost importance, and we try to engage them on a variety of levels. We invite our families into the school on numerous family nights and school day events so that they

can experience literacy learning hand-in-hand with their children. Also, our teachers keep the lines of communication open as they chronicle student progress over the year and relay that to stakeholders. We are currently in the process of revitalizing our literacy workshops where family members learn how to help students with a variety of literacy skills and take home resources to support new learning.

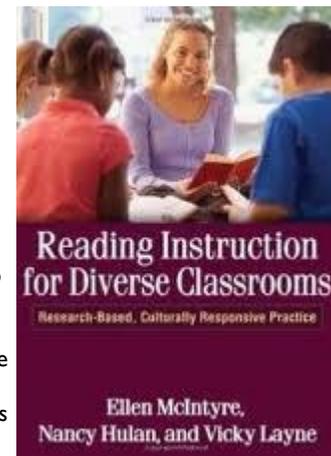
What are the strengths of literacy (reading, writing, speaking and listening) programs for your diverse student population?

The strengths of our literacy programs lie in the structures we design to support diversity. Our classrooms are set up to recognize that students learn at different rates, have different background experiences with text and possess a wide variety

of literacy skills. In order to accommodate these vast concepts, our teachers participate in ongoing professional development that enables them to teach ALL students they encounter with differentiated instructional strategies. Our programs are hands-on, student-centered and arranged so that students learn from one another. Within each literacy classroom, students experience whole group, small group and individual conferencing sessions that recognize and respect all ability levels and backgrounds.

How do you, through this text or your position as literacy coach for the past five years, help students produce and comprehend multiple text (e.g., print, digital)?

Throughout the K-5 experience, students move at varying rates, and teachers must



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Effective Practices for Teachers of English Learners- Part II

In last month's article, we began a discussion of effective practices for English learners (ELs). This month, I want to focus on another effective practice -- building on English learners' background experiences to support their literacy learning.

All students come to the classroom with a host of background knowledge and experience that informs their learning process. However, English learners bring with them cultural backgrounds, knowledge and experiences that may be quite different from the mainstream students in your classes. It is important to remember, though, that English learners

are a heterogeneous group. Some ELs are immigrants, while others were born here in the U.S.; some have strong native language literacy skills, while others are learning to read for the first time in any language. As you work with English learners, take the time to draw out of them the rich and varied experiences they have had and encourage them to share these experiences. When ELs feel their differences are accepted, they feel safe. This sense of safety is a crucial component necessary for ELs to build their second language proficiency.

English learners are bilingual and bicultural. They are learning about a new language and

culture in school, but they are immersed much of the time in their home language and culture. ELs who know how to read in their first language have already learned phonemic awareness, phonics, text comprehension and fluency, and they have vocabulary knowledge. It is not necessary to teach them these skills again in English. As they acquire English vocabulary and grammar, they will naturally transfer their literacy skills from one language to the other. However, many teachers wonder: "if my students don't speak English do I need to wait until they have some oral proficiency before teaching them to read in English?" Research shows that English learners benefit from



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21st-Century Learning at Mason County Middle School

Tweeting Towards Success: Using Twitter in the Classroom

by Ella Bowling
Mason County Middle School

This past year, I have been experimenting with using different outlets of technology to promote student success in my classroom. Much of this stemmed from the fact that as a science teacher, I am now held accountable for reading scores through the implementation of the new Common Core Literacy Standards. I knew that if I was going to ramp up the integration of literacy into my classroom, it had to be as exciting and hands-on as the science I do on a day-to-day basis.

At the beginning of this year, I started using Twitter personally to track several scientists and other educational profes-

sionals to add to my professional learning network (PLN, in Twitter terms). I was gaining TONS of knowledge each Tuesday evening by participating in the #edchat on Twitter, and this sparked an idea. I knew that many of my students were using Twitter because they followed me. With this in mind, I set a date on the night before a test to host my very own TweetChat to help students study and prepare themselves for the test the next day. The format I used was simple. I told the students what time to log on, gave them the hashtag (#mcmsscience) that I would be using to group my tweets so that they could search and find only the tweets regarding the information about the test, and then started tweeting away and answering their questions at 9 p.m. I had never expected that I would have so much student interest and that this little event would have skyrocketed

into such a success. That evening, over 50 students from both 7th-grade teams logged on and participated in the discussion and reviewed the questions. The next day when the test results were in, I had an overall average of 87 percent on the multiple choices, and there were no students who scored less than a 3 on their extended responses.

Once that event sparked such great results and interest in my students, I then worked to set up a classroom Twitter account, @mcmsscience, where not only I can share things that are going on and host TweetChat sessions, but my students can use it to share what we've done in class, what they learned, and more. It has been phenomenal! We know that Twitter really makes you

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“Education technology is very important because we have a massive challenge in public schools. Children are already accustomed to a world that moves faster and is more exciting than anything a teacher in front of a classroom can do.”

-Major Owens



Effective Practices

building all four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking simultaneously. For your ELs who may not have strong literacy skills in their first language, it is still important to support their bilingualism with opportunities to use their first language to support their second language development. This can be done by providing ELs with texts in their first language or by giving them opportunities to confirm and discuss what they are learning in English with someone who speaks their language – either a peer or a bilingual assistant if one is available.

Another effective way to build on ELs' background knowledge

is through an intentional focus on a multicultural perspective when choosing classroom texts. There is a layer of cultural knowledge that we all carry with us to inform our understanding of texts. When we provide ELs with texts and contexts with which they are familiar, we are scaffolding their learning and providing them with that extra support necessary to promote their literacy, while at the same time acknowledging that the world is a diverse and wonderful place.

*-Jayne Kraemer, Ph.D.
Title III Consultant, English Learners and Immigrant Students*

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References:
Echevarria, J. &. (2009). Response to intervention and English learners.
http://www.cal.org/create/resources/pubs/CREATEBrief_RespondtoIntervention.pdf
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/educators/content/vocabulary/>

21st-Century Learning

think about what to write because you only have 140 characters (that's letters and spaces). As of now, I am letting my gifted and talented students that are in my regular classes use the Twitter account at the end of class if they finish early to respond to what we learned that day, to find and share videos, pictures and more related to what we are doing in class. This is a bonus for these students, and they love getting to use this technology. One way this has been made possible is that I have two iPads along with six desktop computers in my classroom. Students also are allowed to bring their own iPods, iPhones, iPads and other devices to class if we are going to be responding to something on Twitter. Many more students have signed up for a

Twitter account as a result of this, and many are responding daily to what we are doing. I use it as exit slips, bellworks and lots of other short formative assessments to get an idea of what they have learned or what they want to learn.

With my success, the news spread to other teachers, and I had a request from district administrators and teachers to host an informational session and training on how to integrate Twitter and get started using it in their classrooms. There are lots of ways to use Twitter in the classroom, and I have highlighted them on my personal wiki page in a PowerPoint that was shared with other teachers and administrators. The PowerPoint and other resources can be found at

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<http://mrsbowlingscienceclass.pbworks.com/w/page/50196592/Twitter%20in%20the%20Classroom>.

Ella Bowling is a 7th-grade science teacher at Mason County Middle School.



Contest | 2012 Video Ecology Contest for French Language High School students in the Midwest - Win a trip to France

Exchange for Forest Preservation and Conservation
Deadline : 04/15/2011

The Cultural Service of the Consulate General of France in Chicago, the Embassy of France in Washington D.C., the American Association of French Teachers and the Good Planet Foundation present an ecology contest for high school students enrolled in French language class in the Midwest in celebration of the theme *Exchange for Forest Preservation and Conservation*.

CONTEST

Students are invited to submit individual project proposals for local or personal environmental protection initiatives. The presentation must include a

demonstration of the student's interest in environmental issues and his/her commitment to environmental protection. Good Planet Foundation, chaired by Yann Arthus-Bertrand, is the partner of the *Green Connection 2012 : Exchange for the Forest Protection and Conservation*.

In order to encourage students to enter the "Green Connection" contest, science teachers and teachers of French are invited to offer one or more activities on the theme of forest protection and conservation. The Good Planet Foundation, partner of the "Green Connection 2012," has provided a number of online resources to help teach-

ers increase student awareness about forest conservation, including: The film, pictures of the exhibition and a digital version of the book *Of Forests and Men*.

This material is adaptable to a variety of teaching approaches and pedagogical activities, depending on the needs of the science or French class in question. These activities will offer students the chance to answer the following questions:
- What is a forest?
- Why are forests threatened?
- How can we act now to protect our forests for the future?



FRENCH EMBASSY
IN THE UNITED STATES

HIGHER EDUCATION,
ARTS, FRENCH LANGUAGE

RULES

This contest is open to all American high school students (9th-12th grades) who learn French at school. Students are invited to submit individual project proposals for local or personal environmental protection initiatives.

PRIZES

1st Prize: An all-expense-paid educational trip to France (July 2-13)
Important Notice: The 1st-prize winner must be at least 16 years old at the time of entry

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Interview with Vicky Layne

possess the knowledge to teach them accordingly. The text covers the five key areas of reading outlined by the National Reading Panel in its 2000 report. Teachers will find support for decoding, comprehension and fluency instruction. The text also provides research-based strategies that offer practical ways teachers can access a variety of text types and structures.

A great strength of this text includes a chapter on “New Literacies,” where literacy professionals can review the research base on technology in literacy instruction and implement strategies that provide the most powerful experiences for students.

What advice would you give

teachers and/or their PLCs for increasing their knowledge of literacy to motivate and engage students that are disadvantaged due to poverty and/or language barriers?

Literacy professionals need to use scientific approaches that have been proven to show gains. Each chapter addresses the vast research base that supports the key areas of literacy instruction. The more knowledge that a teacher has and is able to apply increases the efficacy in the classroom. The greater efficacy a teacher possesses, the more insight he or she will have into a student’s individual needs, thereby increasing his/her ability to impact learning. Also, using data to inform instruction, quite simply, works. Tailor your assessments to meet the needs of

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your students, then analyze them to identify which of your practices are the most effective and engaging for students.

How can people buy this resource, contact you with other questions and comments or ask you to speak to their teachers/administrators?

The book can be purchased through Amazon.com, Guilford Press Publications and a variety of online booksellers. I can be reached via e-mail [at vicky-layne@bellsouth.net](mailto:vicky-layne@bellsouth.net) for comments, questions or speaking engagements. We also can be found on the *Reading Instruction for Diverse Classrooms* page on Facebook.

Synthia Shelby is a literacy consultant at KDE. Contact her at synthia.shelby@education.ky.gov.

“If we talk about literacy, we have to talk about how to enhance our children's mastery over the tools needed to live intelligent, creative, and involved lives. “

-Danny Glover

Kentucky Literacy Celebration

to literacy issues and their relevance to workforce, economic and cultural prosperity. Families may dedicate specific time to read together. Individuals may volunteer to share a book or help with a literacy-related school project. The possibilities are limitless. The

goal is to have every Kentucky resident engage in a literacy event, public or private, to emphasize the importance of all aspects of literacy.

All events may be submitted for inclusion in the celebration schedules. An online form will

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allow entities to share their events with specific information related to each. A Facebook page has been established to also allow for comments, support, event announcements, literacy activity ideas and photos.

Contest

into the French territory.

Other Prizes: French books.

The first prize winner’s teacher also will receive a one-year subscription to the magazine *Le français dans le monde*: www.fdlm.org

[Click here](#) to learn more

about this contest.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Teachers should post their students’ contest entry videos on YouTube and provide the video links (URLs) on the contest application form. To create a YouTube account: http://www.youtube.com/create_account?next=%2F

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2. Teachers must then fill out and submit the application form (one per class) by e-mail. For more information and application forms, [click here](#).

CONTACT

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GoodPlanet.org

Louisville Writing Project Presents *Grammar for Teachers*

For teachers who are interested in brushing up their skills as they prepare to help students meet the new Common Core State Standards for Language, (www.corestandards.org), *Grammar for Teachers* will be a mutual exploration of grammar instruction for today's classrooms. The workshop approach will enable individuals' efforts to contribute to everyone's knowledge and expertise.

Teachers can expect to take concrete strategies for teaching grammar back to their classrooms in the form of an anthology of lessons compiled from the work of all participants.

Register for EDAP 694, Grammar for Teachers (paying regular University of Louisville tuition) OR earn PD credit.

- \$150 per strand/reduced price for all 10 sessions: \$250
- June 18 through, 22 9 a.m.-1 p.m. \$150/18 hr. PD credit
- June 25 through 29 9 a.m.-1 p.m. \$150 /18 hr. PD credit

Participation in both strands,

although helpful, is not essential for participants who have strong backgrounds in grammar and grammar instruction. An overview of critical information from Strand 1 will be provided on the first day.

NOTE: If you plan to earn graduate credit, simply register at www.louisville.edu during summer registration.

In Strand 1, explore:

- What is grammar? Why is it important? How do I help my students value grammar?
- What do I know? We'll assess our own strengths and work to develop our skills.
- What do my students need to learn? If possible, bring student work for analysis activities.
- What is my philosophy of teaching grammar?
- What does research tell us about teaching grammar effectively?
- How do I teach grammar *and* writing?

In strand 2, explore:

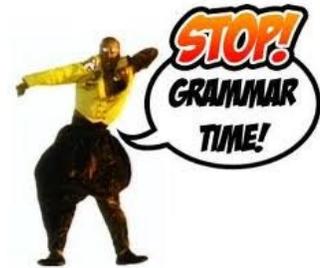
- What resources help students learn grammar skills in context?
- What kinds of lessons help students learn grammar skills in

the context of their writing?

- What kinds of instruction help students learn to apply grammar concepts independently?
- What do the Kentucky Core Academic Standards/Common Core College & Career Readiness Standards say about grammar mastery?
- What kinds of instruction help students learn to apply grammar concepts independently?

We'll look specifically at Jeff Anderson's *Mechanically Inclined* and try our hands at some of his lessons. We'll also explore other research-based resources for teaching grammar. If possible, bring resources for teaching grammar used at your school or that you particularly like. Participants will leave this experience with a collection of lessons to use in preparing for fall.

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“Grammar is the logic of speech, even as logic is the grammar of reason.”

-Richard Chenevix Trench

Health Education Assessment Project

The Health Education Assessment Project (HEAP) mission is to develop effective health education resources through a collaborative process and to increase members' capacity to align curriculum, instruction and assessment to improve student health literacy through improved health instruction. Our readers (and all Kentucky teachers) have FREE access to HEAP's online resource library. Here you

can find a database of health-related texts, complete with lesson plans, content vocabulary and more. These texts lend themselves to easy integration into English/language arts curriculum. Using the HEAP resources in your instruction could serve as evidence in your practical living/career studies Program Review.

To access these resources:

1. Go to <http://scasheap.org/>.
2. Click on member log-in on

the left side of the screen.

3. Username: kyheap
4. Password: 6cb5ky
5. Click on “Heap of Books” on left side of the home screen.
6. Search for books and related lessons by title, grade, health topics, health skills or keywords.

There also are other resources on the site that you are free to explore. For more information, contact [Jamie Sparks](mailto:jsparks@scasheap.org).





Your contributions of ideas and lessons that work are welcome. E-mail kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov to submit. Your submissions may be included in the *Literacy Link* to help connect teachers across the state by sharing ideas, insights and best practices.

Access this and past *Literacy Links* on KDE's website: [Click Here](#)



If you have questions or concerns, we want to help. Contact:

- Renee Boss- Academic Core Branch Manager - renee.boss@education.ky.gov
- Cindy Parker - Literacy Coordinator - cindy.parker@education.ky.gov
- Kathy Mansfield- Library Consultant - kathy.mansfield@education.ky.gov
- MK Hardaway- Literacy Consultant - kay.hardaway@education.ky.gov
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- Synthia Shelby- Literacy Consultant - synthia.shelby@education.ky.gov



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Feedback from the Field

Your hard work gets noticed! Thanks to the amazing contributions from our readers and the buzz you've generated by reading and sharing the *Literacy Link*, even the United States Department of Education has taken notice. Thanks for reading, and please keep submitting your ideas, sending me feedback and sharing the *Link*

with your colleagues. You never know who's reading.

"The newsletter is amazing. Thank you so much for thinking to send it to me. I hope you and your colleagues are as proud of it as I feel – it's a wonderful tool you've created. Kudos."

- Katie C., U.S. Department of Education



Additional Reading and Other Resources

- *Adolescents and Digital Literacies: Learning Alongside Our Students* by Sara Kajder
- *Teach Like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College* by Doug Lemov
- *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer's Workshop* by Jeff Anderson
- *Addressing Three Modes of Writing Kentucky Core Academic Standards in the 21st Century: Tips for Understanding Standards, Instruction & Assessment* released by KDE winter 2012 (access [here](#))
- Access K-PREP administration materials such as

the scoring criteria and writer's reference sheet [here](#).

