

# **Kristen Tinch, M.A.E. Literacy, 2020 M.A. English Literature, 2023**

*By Christina West*

## **Secondary Literacy Consultant, Kentucky Department of Education**

*“I’m really excited to have an advanced humanities degree. I’m proud of it and the sacrifice is worth it, but it is very challenging.”*



Kristen Tinch graduated from Murray State University in 2013 with a B.A. in English and Spanish Education. She obtained her M.A.E. in Literacy from WKU in 2020 and is currently in the English M.A. program, which she will complete in spring 2023.

Tinch has always dreamed of being a teacher. “Ever since I was little, I just thought teachers were so powerful and influential, and it was such an honorable and dignified profession. It breaks my heart that it is not the way so many people view teachers in our current world.” Tinch has been teaching at Bowling Green High School for the past eight years. She currently teaches AP English, English III, and College Cohort English.

Tinch’s first master’s, an M.A.E. in Literacy, provided her with a practical, scientific perspective on adolescent literacy and reading across disciplines. “I chose literacy as my first master’s because I knew I was interested in teaching, reading, and writing at a more advanced level. I’ve always been really interested in literacy, how our brains learn to read, and how we can help struggling readers,” said Tinch. “The hallmark of adolescent literacy is getting students to read and write at a high level across the disciplines—not just in English classes.”

Currently, Tinch is working on completing an M.A. in English Literature. Though it is very challenging to manage full-time teaching while working towards her second master’s, Tinch is proud to be in the English M.A. program. “It really is challenging, but it’s been worth it and has enriched my teaching experience,” said Tinch. “I’m constantly in that mode of thinking about literature as an art form because of the M.A.” Tinch also

enjoys how she has been able to get both a scientific and humanities perspective from her advanced degrees.

An M.A. in English Literature has been a practical pursuit for Tinch. “I’m really excited that so many of the professors understand that I’m a teacher, I’m practical, and I want tools to enrich my teaching career,” Tinch stated. “I love Dr. Knoll’s Introduction to graduate studies class because she was mindful about creating units of study that discussed different aspects of higher education.”

Tinch noted that the M.A. program has been very useful for a wide range of professional goals; for example, she was able to write and submit a piece for an outside publication in her coursework. She is also enjoying a Teaching English as a Second Language class with Dr. Stickle. Though this is not where her interests lie, Tinch emphasized the way Stickle does her best to make the class applicable to individual interests.

Additional exciting things are in store for Tinch, who will be starting a new job as a Secondary Literacy Consultant for the Kentucky Department of Education. In this position, Tinch will provide support for teachers so that they can ensure their content is at the correct level of difficulty. “The goal of my new job is to help teachers create on-grade-level assignments and to make sure that they’re conscious of equity in education,” said Tinch.

