

Jill Cooper

*Argyle Alternative High School
Winnipeg, Manitoba*



I have been teaching high school English for three years after ten years teaching middle school. I have taught all four core subjects as well as drama, but most of my training and experience is as an English teacher. I am also a student. I'm taking my Masters in Education at the University of Manitoba with a particular focus on education for social justice.

The Book Love classroom library combined with the existing books in my classroom has made the space even more popular than the school library. We have more books in my room and I am there to help students choose. The school library, like so many others in schools across the city and country, is understaffed and often sits

empty while staffing dollars are diverted to equip classrooms with teachers.

I start each day with silent reading and a book talk. After that, students and I write together about something inspired by the book. These daily writings form the beginnings of longer and more formal pieces of writing. Or....they don't. Even if they never use them beyond the one task, they have been writers for that moment and no one will criticize the work. If they couldn't think of anything, there will be more opportunities the next day. And the day after.....

I know from reading and writing with my students on a daily basis that consistency and choice build interest, engagement, and fluency. My students recognize that the more often they read and write, the more they build their own skills. They also know that these skills help them to critically navigate the world around them. We share the stories we've read from the bookshelves and then the stories we've lived from our hearts.

