



FOR THE LOVE OF READING

The beginning of my transformation as a teacher occurred when I was talking to a student about reading with my own kids at home and about their favourite stories.

This student asked me *“how many books do you have in your house?”*

“Oh, I don’t know. We have quite a few. Each of my children have bookcases full of books. I have books but I try to share them with others. We will often have library books as well,”

“I don’t think we ever had a book in our house until I went to school. And then the books from school would never come out of my bag.” He laughed.

As he was laughing this comment off, I was simply sad. How do you make up the time he has lost exploring the world through books? Some of my best memories are curled up on the couch or in one of my children’s beds reading books together.

I teach grades 9-12 English Language Arts. Throughout my career, I have taught students who are considered “at risk” due to their high needs, gaps in learning, and/or low socio-economic standing. These students may face various challenges such as poverty, limited resources, lack of access to educational opportunities, family and social issues, and academic struggles. In my classroom I want my students to have the opportunity to explore the world through books, to develop a sense of confidence, skills, and a sense of belonging as they are supported through reading and discussing books that interest/engage them.

I have always believed reading to be very important so much so that my master’s thesis was focused on children’s comprehension strategies and how much they know before they walk into kindergarten. Furthermore, through the professional readings of Cris Tovani, Penny Kittle, and Kelly Gallagher, I have incorporated reading and writing into our daily routine. During our reading time my students will be observed reading; listening to me read as I share my thinking; reading with other students; talking about their reading; and/or reading as a writer. I have seen students who hated English and never read a book, finish books, and more importantly identify as readers. The atmosphere I am trying to develop through reading and writing is one where we read together, we read independently, we talk about our reading, we connect our reading to ourselves, and the world.

I was very fortunate to receive support to begin my classroom library with a “The Manitoba Teacher’s Idea Fund”, and now with the 2023 Book Love grant, I will be able to add to my library. I have seen the books that have engaged students and my students have already started a wish list of books that they want me to order. This is an exciting time for my classroom. Thank you, Book Love Foundation.