

# Kelly Chacon



I have been teaching for 21 years. During that time, I have gone through many versions of reading in my class—from SSR, to book clubs, to independent reading. Every year I change it—sometimes minor changes and sometimes doing something completely different. I think it can be easy to just feel like something is good enough, but I have a hard time with that. I always feel like I can make it better. And each time I try something new, I grow as a teacher. But the bigger thing for me is how I see my students grow. As I have matured as an educator, my goals for my students have definitely changed. For me, it is not about them reading a book. For me, it is about students who start to enjoy reading again or maybe even enjoy reading for the first time.

An important part of being able to get students to enjoy reading is to ensure that they have the resources to do so. I have been working for years to advocate for my classroom to get more relevant books for my students. I have actively built a classroom library that includes LGBTQIA+, social justice, and mental health topics. My students are integral to the process of choosing new books. I ask students what books they would like to see in my classroom library and then purchase some of those books to show that I support their interests and ideas. I think it is important as educators to understand that what we would want to read is not necessarily what students want to read. I think we need to make space for that in education.



**I BELIEVE THAT** when you don't invest in new books for a school library or in classrooms, you are telling kids that reading doesn't matter. **MY GOAL** is for students to see a space in my classroom where reading is important, valuable, and enjoyable.