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Sitting in the audience during the Reading for the Love of It Conference in 2019 was game changing for me as a teacher. I realized that I became a teacher because I love reading and I wanted to share that love with as many students as possible. But I came to that love through my family and own personal reading experiences, not through school. Listening to Penny Kittle and Kelly Gallagher speak, among the many other inspirational teachers and leaders during that conference, helped me see the possibilities within my classroom to generate joy for reading and writing.

Kittle said something about focusing on just being a 10% better teacher each year, and I have carried that with me as my mantra. I use it to ground myself when I am too excited about all the new possibilities that I want to start all at once, or to encourage myself when the one change I am making is slow and difficult. The progress is happening and now that I can look back on the past few years, I can see how a 10% change every year actually adds up to a substantial difference.

My classroom library has also been a gamechanger. I have the opportunity to talk to students in the moment about their reading interests and obstacles, and to actually put books right into their hands. It reinforces the value of books and reading because they are present and lovingly displayed in my room. It makes them accessible (as the mess of the displays at the end of the day attests to.) It makes better writers possible because we have mentor texts and models of writing with which students connect and to which they relate.



I love my books!



Favorite books

This grant means so much to me because it means I can represent more of my students' lived experiences on the shelves of my library; I can capture more of their imaginations; I can open more doors in their futures; and we can become a community of book lovers together.

