



NATASHA KOSTYNIUK

Teaching English Language Arts has been the highlight of my career. All I look forward to each day is being able to sit down beside my students and conference with them regarding their choice read or book clubs. I was not an avid reader in my elementary or secondary years. I often would fake read to gain rewards or incentives and would struggle academically because I had trouble with reading. One teacher. One year. Impacted me. I had choice and I was hooked on what I wanted to read, and instantly fell in love with literature. Hearing stories similar to my own from students makes the greatest impact on me. The best way to teach reading and writing is the literature that students have in their hands. Choice, passion, and a culture of reading has made all the difference in my classroom. I am privileged to get the opportunity to teach my subject areas and hear success stories all the time. When we surround ourselves with wonderful literature, we thrive.

As a former student of Ms. Kostyniuk's, I know her passion for reading in the classroom has benefited me in my post secondary education. She implemented designated times during class to allow students to read a novel of their own choosing. She provided students the chance to formulate questions and conclusions about their novel. Her teaching styles helped students generate questions and provided them with reading strategies that would benefit them in other areas of the classroom. From first-hand experience of being a student in her classroom she would provide reading strategies and goals for us to work on, ask questions, and allow us students to provide our thoughts and opinions about the book. She implemented reading and writing skills throughout high school which gave me a head start to success in my university classes. She did this by weekly check-ins with our personal books in the classroom, collaborations with reading material, and analyzing it thoroughly. She also kept a quiet and comfortable environment in the classroom for all of her students to enjoy their novel. After being in Ms. Kostyniuk's classroom it provided me with confidence and a deeper understand of my reading and writing strengths for my first year of post-secondary. I was always supported and encouraged within the classroom to utilize my reading comprehension skills and abilities. –Megan Person

She is a transformative leader who leads by example as she herself is an avid reader in all types of genres ranging from classical novels of, *To Kill a Mockingbird* to modern classroom material, *The Marrow Thieves*. These choices enable her to bring to the classroom an understanding of a wide range of themes, content and societal issues, equipped to immerse her students in various subject matters and topics. Natasha is a transformative classroom leader who motivates, inspires and encourages students to be part of their own reading decisions that will conjure meaningful change for themselves. This leadership style transforms classroom morale and develops student self-confidence that intersects with individual reading goals. She creates a classroom reading culture where students take responsibility and accountability for their reading comforts. Her open, friendly and collaborative classroom space allows students to share original ideas and safely converse concerning issues or topics. She always provides constructive feedback to ensure the students' comprehension aligns with what they believe in or discuss. Natasha's lesson plans are deeply connected to the curriculum, enlivening, well-orchestrated and relevant. This ensures she is developing readers for student achievement and where mistakes are viewed as a process of enhancing and stirring students to elevate their desire for reading.

–Joanne Tremblay