

For my drawing, I drew a girl sitting in her living room on her recliner. She is feeling relaxed and comfortable. She has a book in her hands and a blanket covering her legs. She is smiling and happy as she reads her book. The book keeps her attention with its twists and turns. She is feeling some kind of connection to the characters in the text. Her favorite cat is laying on the floor next to the recliner :) The pellet stove is keeping her warm as well.

The image shows that I believe reading is a pleasurable and relaxing activity, and it is a normal and important part of our daily lives. As a reader, I have the ability to just pick any book I want to read and find a nice, comfortable spot in my home to read it. I have the ability to comprehend what I am reading and to connect to what I am reading in some way. Sometimes, I feel that while I enjoy reading, I am not doing it enough. It feels like other things take away from the time I want to spend reading and enjoying a good book. The image I drew reminds me of what I would do on a snow day or a winter vacation day, when things are quieter and I am not busy with work.

The image seems to match the readerly life I live when I am not working and feel like I have more time (summer, vacations, snow days). Reflecting on my image makes me feel a bit sad that I set aside the time for reading when I am on vacation and relaxed, but that I don't make as much time for it when I am working and things are more hectic. Reading is an activity I enjoy, but I do not allow my time the pleasure of reading a good book every day, all year long! I let other parts of my life take over it seems. I know that I need to set a goal to read every day (even for 10-15 minutes) and find the best time in my day to do that. This best time would be in the mornings when I wake up and before I get ready for my day/work. It should also be when my students are reading independently in class. I need to be a reader role model for them.

I need to help students experience the same feelings I get from reading: feeling "lost" in a book, feeling happy and relaxed when reading, and feeling like reading is not a chore when

you do it. I also think my classroom reading community needs a teacher who “practices what she preaches” and is reading every day, all year long rather than just when she is on vacation. My classroom reading community also needs a teacher who is reading more of what is out there for young adults/teens so we can connect through discussions of what we are reading, so I can make recommendations, etc...

Below is the list of books for the “Track Your Texts” Activity:

- Sesame Street books and encyclopedias
- Black Beauty was a favorite when I could read by myself, any books about horses
- Magazines: ‘Teen Magazine, Seventeen Magazine
- Teens, Young Adult Life: Books by Mary Higgins Clark- my mom read these too, we loved the suspense that the books provided
- Adult Life: I’ve read nearly all of the books by Nicholas Sparks- my favorite is The Notebook; More recent: The Dysautonomia Project, Brain on Fire & Ghosts of War

I think Sesame Street books are so remembered because I loved watching Sesame Street on TV as a child too. The Black Beauty books were a favorite of mine, because I was a horseback rider from about the ages of 6-12. I have always loved horses. My mom got me hooked on the books by Mary Higgins Clark. We were able to share the author’s books with each other and talk about them.

I love all of the Nicholas Sparks books, with The Notebook as my favorite. It is a touching love story and the movie is just as good! The Dysautonomia Project is a powerful book for me because I can relate to it. I have a disorder of my autonomic nervous system (called POTS), and I needed to read this book to help me better understand my disorder. I have shared the book as well with other family members.

Brain on Fire intrigued me. I saw the movie first and then read the book. It is a true story about a woman who had a mysterious illness and, like me, it took awhile for her to get an accurate diagnosis. People thought she had a psychiatric disorder, but she actually had a brain disease. Ghosts of War is a book that I have read multiple times as we read it in 9th grade. Personally, I really enjoy reading memoirs and true accounts of people's experiences of historical events, rather than reading about it through a textbook. I do think my students prefer this book for learning about the Iraq War as well.

I see a mix of fiction and non-fiction here in my list. I think the interest in reading non-fiction has increased more in my adult life. I will tend to read more non-fiction when it is a topic I can relate to. But, I prefer to read fiction for the most part.

I definitely read more fiction with students in the ELA classes for our whole class shared books. These are the types of books that over my life I am able to get "lost in" and would choose to read first. Honestly, the only two non-fiction books that I have really taught are Ghosts of War and Night. For Ghosts of War, it may be because I enjoy the text, but I know that students enjoy it too and find it relatable since the author lives locally and attended high school in our neighboring district. He talks about his high school experiences, and visits our school as well.

A goal for this upcoming school year is to help my students see that reading can be a pleasurable activity. This is hard for struggling readers who feel like reading is a chore. I want them to see that the more time we spend reading a variety of texts that interest of us from different genres, the more improved our reading lives are. This applies to me as well.