

Member Spotlight – Abbey Dick

Our last two spotlights took us to Maine. For this one, we return to Massachusetts.

The Bio: This is my 19th year in public education. I started teaching in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas with the Teach for America program. I taught English in Massachusetts, spending much of that time focused on AP Language and Composition. I then worked at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as a literacy specialist before moving into curriculum administration. I'm currently the English Department Coordinator for grades 5-12 for the Chelmsford Public Schools, MA. I work with thirty-nine amazing English teachers.



An Influence: Anything Kelly Gallagher writes makes me happy. I'm a really practical person--his books are full of unique tasks and mentor texts to try the next day, and they are rooted in a strong foundation of what it means to be an effective English teacher, building skills while respecting students as readers and writers.

A Go-to Strategy: I think that whenever you make something personal, engagement follows. Whenever I can have students or adults make an individual connection to a topic or have an opinion or share an idea, I think that task makes them want to dive deeper. Student-centered design works. We need to move from teacher-centered coverage of texts to student-centered mastery of skills.

A Favorite Book: I feel like I could read *The Great Gatsby* every day and be satisfied; it's like going home. I never tire of it, and I am surprised by new sentences every time I reread it. Two other books that I didn't get to teach as often but became enamored of are *On The Beach* by Nevil Shute and *FEED* by M.T. Anderson. Both are devastating critiques of our current culture.

Something Personal: I'm studying American Sign Language and started the ASL Club at our high school. I'm also invested in the edcamp movement--that style of professional development really energizes and inspires me. I'm a faithful reader of *The New Yorker* and Twitter, and I love seeing live stand-up comedy.