



Featured Teacher: Adrianna Allen

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Cast of Characters

First-grade students in Colesburg, IA

Background and Setting

Allen has been a teacher for seven years.

Memorable Learning

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It All Began with Gratitude

Seven years ago, Allen set out to create something memorable for her first graders - a class activity that would celebrate learning, creativity and thankfulness all at once. Publishing a classbook would become a beloved tradition.

"It's truly become one of my favorite classroom traditions," Allen said.

Her first classbook, "First Grade Is Thankful For...", was created for Thanksgiving and allowed her students to showcase their new writing skills.

"It was the perfect way to showcase our newly developed sentence-writing skills while also celebrating the holiday in a meaningful, and fun, way," said Allen. "Watching my students see themselves as real authors for the first time was something I'll never forget—and it's a tradition I've loved continuing every year since."

Building Confident Writers

Publishing a classbook isn't just about writing for her class: it's about confidence, reflection and growth.

"I truly believe that creating a classbook builds so much confidence in my students as writers," said Allen. "There's something so powerful about seeing their hard work turned into a published, hardcover book. It makes them feel like real authors."

Allen makes it a goal to publish in both the fall and spring, giving her class the chance to reflect on their progress and discover just how far their writing skills have come.

One moment she'll never forget came from a determined student who struggled with handwriting at the start of the school year.

"When our spring books arrived, he flipped back to compare [his writing] to the fall book, and couldn't believe the difference. He pointed out how much neater and clearer his writing had become," said Allen. "Being able to physically see his growth made him so proud—he was on cloud nine. It was such a special reminder of how impactful these books can be for building confidence and celebrating progress."

Publishing Excitement

The high energy in Allen's classroom during publishing is unmistakable. From the publishing process to seeing the final book, her class is filled with pride and passion.

"My students absolutely love the entire process... We spend time brainstorming people and things we're thankful for, which gives us a meaningful opportunity to reflect on all the good in our lives," she said. "One of my favorite parts is surprising my class with a Publishing Party when the books



finally come in! We celebrate with treats, a big 'Congratulations' sign and each student gets the chance to read their page aloud to their classmates. It's such a fun and special experience, and you can see their confidence grow as they hold their published work and share it with pride."

The Joy of Sharing Success

When the Publishing Party finally arrives, joy radiates through her classroom.

"No matter the class or the theme of the book, [students] can't wait to flip through the pages. They giggle as we read each page aloud and genuinely love complimenting one another's work," said Allen. "It creates such a positive, supportive environment where every student feels proud of what they've accomplished. Moments like these are so special. They're not just celebrating a book, they're celebrating each other."

Simple Advice

"Go for it!" said Allen.

She shared that watching her class' confidence in their authorship grow is unmatched. Allen said, "Not only is it a meaningful way for them to showcase their writing skills, but it also brings the writing process to life in a real and exciting way. They begin to see themselves as authors and can even connect their own publishing experience to that of their favorite writers. It's something they'll remember long after the school year ends!"



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