

Learning Never Ends

By Stacey Avery

As an educator, my responsibility is to continue growing in my teaching to become the best teacher for my students. Learning does not stop when a diploma or teaching certificate is achieved. Learning is ongoing. I expect my students to learn something new every day and should be the same for me.

Once completing my degree, my goal is to continue finding new ways to teach my students and be a better leader in my school. My first goal is to incorporate technology more effectively into my reading and math program. This goal stems from the inclusion of a program called [iReady](#) into our elementary classrooms this fall. My second goal is to continue developing a well-rounded reading program using [Daily 5](#) and [CAFE](#) as the framework. This model has been implemented by a few teachers in our school already. It has shown to be an effective teaching tool. The final goal in my continued learning is to focus on expanding my educational leadership skills. Within the past four year, my school has changed by bringing in several newer teachers which has placed me into a mentor role.

Technology is an ever-growing phenomenon expanding from computers and laptops to iPads and Smart phones. When I was in elementary school, these options were unavailable but are very present in my students' lives. My charter company has strongly urged our elementary teachers to embrace an online program called [iReady](#) as a way to increase reading and math skills. This program is extremely interesting but still quite foreign to me. I have spent some time exploring the program, but my comfortable level is still low. By fall, my goal is to become comfortable enough with iReady so I can start my students on it during the first month of school. Incorporating this program will add more depth to my students' learning by providing opportunity to use technology and challenge them with new skills. Some reformatting of my reading and math blocks will be needed for this inclusion. This is new for me causing some nervousness as well as excitement.

Reading is the most fundamental skill for any student, in my opinion. In my eight years of teaching, I have changed my reading program every other year either due to administration changes or my own choosing. Teaching reading is difficult for me hence the many changes. With newer teachers in my building, they have brought different ideas for reading. Several have been confident with [Daily 5](#) and [CAFE](#) as their framework for teaching reading. I have worked with trying to incorporate Daily 5 but not to the full extent. This coming school year, I want to dive into this framework and use alongside my current teaching to build a strong reading program. Reading and discussion with successful colleagues will be needed for my success with the program. This will build my confidence and make for an easier change this year.

Educational leadership is an ever growing need in schools. Teachers are not only responsible for the students in their classroom but also building a strong school community, communicating with parents and colleagues, and leading various tasks around the building. With working in a charter school, there are

many more opportunities for leadership roles. When our new principal came four years ago, he had some major rebuilding to complete for our struggling school community. With this change, several new teachers were hired who were fresh out of college or only taught a few years. Since I had already been at the school for a while and have some experience, several teachers have come to me for guidance with school policies, teaching strategies, and ways to communicate with parents. With this in mind, I want to build my leadership skills to continue to build a strong morale with my colleagues. I found an organization called [ASCD](#) (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) centered on building educational leadership. They provide professional development both online and conferences. They also have a magazine called [Educational Leadership](#) devoted to providing articles about teaching and leadership skills. This magazine will be used as my framework for continuing to learn about how to be a great leader in my school.

Learning never ends. My Master's program may be ending, but my learning should not. Each year, I am presented new students with different learning styles and needs. I need to continue learning new skills and ideas to incorporate into my teaching. By increasing my knowledge and leadership, I provide opportunities for a better and more successful school community and learning environment for my students.