



## **Carol Congdon**

Carol Congdon earned her Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. She later earned her Master's Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

When asked what her personal educational philosophy is and how she demonstrates it in her teaching style Carol notes, "It is my job, as their teacher, to find ways that I can meet the needs of the diverse group of children and help them all to be successful in their journeys to learn and grow. I work hard to make my classroom a safe and accepting environment. I want my students to dare to try something they have never done before and be proud of that attempt regardless of how successful it was. I build consistent routine into my student's day knowing that this provides them with a greater sense of security.

When asked how she works to raise achievement for all students, Carol notes, "I assess my students and provide extra support for children demonstrating a lack of readiness to begin formal instruction." She states these children tend to be economically disadvantaged or non-English speaking students. She works with the Speech and Language Pathologists to identify children who would benefit from small group instruction in Phonemic Awareness. Carol also notes, "It is important that I prevent my kindergartners from practicing a skill incorrectly, so I am constantly in circulation as they work. I monitor and interact with them to provide constant support and feedback." Carol writes a weekly newsletter to her kindergartners' parents so they can be aware of what they are learning.

When asked what innovative projects/programs she has developed for and with students Carol notes, "I am particularly excited about a project I did in collaboration with our English Language Learners' teacher. Following a field trip to a farm, all students created Photo Story movies. I expected that the project would reinforce many of the skills that we were working on in class, but was thrilled to discover that the benefits were even greater than I expected!"

When asked about her commitment to the community through service-oriented activities Carol stated that much of her recent community service work has involved the Fort Atkinson Relay for Life. She served as a team

member, team captain or co-captain for twelve years for the annual American Cancer Society.

When asked about unrealized goals she has for her classroom/professional development Carol notes that she has seen how effective digital photography can be in kindergarten. She has also found that parents love to see pictures in her weekly newsletter. I have much to learn in this area, but hope to have a website up and running in the near future.”

When asked about the positive aspects she sees in education, Carol states she is excited by the possibilities in the Response to Intervention Program. She feels it allows all teachers to collaborate on a plan that would benefit a student with specific needs. She thinks teaching could be improved if there was more time like this for collaboration. Working with colleagues at the same level, as well as across grades, can provide new insights and a deeper understanding of what we are teaching and how it is best taught.”

From a parent, Carol always made learning fun. Each of my children has a memory of making applesauce, butter or soup in class. Out of all the wonderful teachers my children have had, I believe Carol utilizes parent involvement the best. With each of my children, I had the privilege of helping in the classroom. As a parent it is good to know that my children are being held accountable for their actions even when they're not in my presence. Carol's gentle discipline and early parental involvement quickly gets the class off to a good start in their learning journey.”

From Jina Witkins kindergarten teaching colleague at Luther; “from the beginning of my teaching career, Carol has been my mentor and my inspiration! Navigating my first year of curriculum, report cards, conferences, and student behaviors would have been much more difficult if it were not for Carol's gentle guidance and advice. Our positive school culture is a testament to the excellent work she carried out to lay the learning foundation for our school. Indeed, nine years later Carol is still working hard to ensure that our school remains a special place. She is extraordinary at differentiating lessons and does an outstanding job of bringing a diverse group of students together into a learning community.”

From Superintendent, Dr. James Fitzpatrick, “My admiration for Carol Congdon knows no bounds! Sometimes I leave my office which happens to be in the same building, just so I can go by her room and watch her in action with our wee ones! You will never find a more safe, welcoming, and inviting classroom than Carol's kindergarten room at Luther Elementary.”