



## **Sally Davis**

Sally Davis earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Martin Luther College. She later earned her Master's Degree from Viterbo University. She also earned her Reading Recovery Certification from National Louis University Lisle Illinois in 2000 and her Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Certificate from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2007.

When asked what her personal educational philosophy is and how she demonstrates it in her teaching style Sally notes, "I believe that all people can learn. She believes that it is her responsibility to find the way that they learn. It is not their responsibility to learn the way she teaches. Sally believes in teacher responsibility toward the learner, and that flexibility in planning and instruction is a huge part of providing a quality education.

Assessment is also essential, and it needs to be ongoing. A struggling reader, needs to be observed very closely in order to scaffold that which is effective. Daily informal assessments in the form of running records of reading, which record each attempt at a near novel experience, provide data for making decisions to change prompts and foci for the next day or the next moment."

When asked how she inspires her students' love of learning --Sally states that she believes that success inspires the love of learning within a student. It is not the teacher that inspires, but rather it is the successes experienced by the learner because the teacher scaffolds the learning effectively. Success in any endeavor is contagious, and she believes that it is the most powerful motivator in learning to read and write.

When asked what innovative projects/programs she has developed for and with students Sally states that she has been a Reading Recovery teacher since 1999. In 2008 she completed the two-year initial training to be A Teacher Leader of Reading Recovery teachers. During the last school year Sally taught three classes to adults. The goal of the classes was to help special education teachers and regular education teachers understand literacy processing at a deeper level so that they could intervene with students in their classes who were having great difficulty with reading and writing.

When asked about her commitment to the community through service-oriented activities Sally notes that during the past few years, illness has somewhat limited her ability to stretch her time commitments beyond the extra training and responsibilities that her new position as Teacher Leader and staff development facilitator for primary grades require. Sally is a cancer survivor. Through her illness, her colleagues and friends supported her with prayers and helped with meals during her chemotherapy. In order for her to help others in this way, she became the co-director for the Prayer Partners Group at her church.

When asked about unique goals she has addressed of late, Sally states, "This year my school district has broadened my responsibilities to staff development for grades K-1. Sally trained all of our K-1 teachers on the importance of language, assessing early language, and how to implement shared reading and small conversation groups, all with the purpose of supporting growth in language so that learning to read and write will be easier for children."

From a parent, "every day that we hear our son read, we are reminded of the outstanding dedication and expertise of Sally Davis. As a parent, I am honored to write a letter of recommendation for one of the integral individuals responsible for providing our child with the ability to be an independent reader and lifelong learner."

From Ambyr Lemke, a colleague, "I teach first grade at Rockwell Elementary School where we are lucky to have Sally as our reading specialist. From the time I first met Sally she was eager to teach, model, and guide me as a first grade reading teacher. She helps me puzzle out what a child may be confused on in reading or writing. When a child has not achieved to the level Sally has hoped for Sally has said, "The child has not failed, I have failed the child." Her commitment to student success is just astounding! Sally has made regular contacts with student families for reasons as minor as homework to larger concerns of mood, tiredness, or the possibility of eyesight difficulty.

Sally's principal, Mrs. Vicki Wright states, "Sally Davis sets the standard for teachers and reading specialists in the School District of Fort Atkinson. One only has to observe the smile on a student's face when they have grasped a new reading concept to know that they love what Mrs. Davis can do for them. She believes that the best way to help children is through

providing good classroom instruction and giving teachers the tools and knowledge to do just that. “

It is with great pleasure that we recommend Sally Davis for the Herb Kohl Teacher Fellowship Award.