

## JENNIFER SOEHNER

Jennifer Soehner earned her Bachelors Degree from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. She later earned her Masters Degree in Education from Viterbo University LaCrosse, Wisconsin. She joined our Purdy staff in 1996.

Jennifer seeks to learn first, *what can the child do?* From there, she can scaffold lessons that link to what is already known. When she reflects upon students, she thinks of them as individual learners, even if the child is part of an instructional group. How can I meet his/her needs today? What shift can be made in his/her reading and writing behaviors so that the child is becoming more independent each day?

Sometimes this reflection leads to specific teaching of something that is new, but she links it to an already successful behavior. Other times, she leads to prompting, which is a call to action for the desired behavior. In this case, the child has demonstrated the desired reading or writing behavior, he/she is just not using it as efficiently as it could be used. There is a fine line between teaching and prompting, but by reflecting on their learning and her teaching, she sees what is needed for each individual.

“My position as a reading specialist and a Reading Recovery teacher allows me to work in many different capacities to raise student achievement. I work will

all students through my work with their teachers. I lead collegial staff development on literacy strategies and instructional materials. In addition to training staff on the delivery of reading assessments, I work with them to interpret the results and reflect on the implications for their instruction of diverse groups and individual learners.”

Jennifer further states, “My Reading Recovery lessons are delivered one-on-one to my first grade students with the goal of accelerating achievement to the average level of the class in 12-20 weeks.

When asked what the positive aspects she sees in education Jennifer commented that her Fort Atkinson is becoming a Comprehensive Literacy Model District. Some of the staff have made the commitment to be learners by being coached in an apprenticeship model. She explained that they have courageous conversations about learners and, by first examining their teaching, they improve and refine how they can best meet the needs for all students.

Last year Jennifer and a special education teacher asked to team-teach. They designed a literacy block where they successfully commingled reading support students and special education students to better suit their instructional needs. Their collaboration spurred a district-wide initiative of professional literacy development for elementary special education staff and the adoption of the Leveled Literacy Intervention as a tier three and four intervention.

Jennifer strongly believes in service to her community. It teaches her innumerable lessons. She learns by volunteering at her church in several capacities. She is a member of the Children's Ministry Team and that makes curricular and policy decisions for the Church's Christian Education Programs including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and the children's after school programming, youth groups and adult groups. She also believes teaching and learning go hand-in-hand. When she teaches cub scouts and youth group activities, along with Boy Scout merit badges, she is also learning.

Jennifer's Principal, Dr. Rick Brietzke notes that one of Jennifer's outstanding teaching traits is her ability to use teaching techniques that match her students' learning needs. Simply said, Jennifer never gives up on her students and conversely her students never give up on her. "

Amy Oakley, Director of Instruction states, "Every child always gets 100% and it is Jennifer's passion to do everything in her power to help that child accelerate.

With Pleasure we forward the nomination of Jennifer Soehner for the Here Kohl Fellowship Award!