

# A FRESH AND FUN APPROACH TO TEACHING: HOW BLENDED LEARNING BROUGHT JOY TO THIS TEACHER'S CLASSROOM

Liz Cronan loved teaching 5th grade. “I love being creative, and I love seeing kids’ energy,” she shares.



So when Cronan, a 27-year veteran teacher, joined Rethink Education’s third Badged Facilitator Cohort in 2023 and learned more about blended learning, she was thrilled to **find even more ways to engage her fifth grade students and bring joy into her classroom.**

The first Rethink Education tool she decided to try was adding stations into her classroom. She previously believed stations were just for younger children, but once she was able to talk with her Cohort peers and hear how they used stations, she quickly became a convert.

“I started learning more about stations by talking to people and networking with other educators with upper grades,” remembers Cronan. “It was my A-HA moment, and **I felt like this could really work.** I could ask questions of people that had already done it and ask ‘okay, how do you handle this aspect? What about this?’”

When it came time to review concepts and instruction for the upcoming End of Grade test, Cronan decided it was the perfect time to give her new skills a try.

“I did station rotation, and I had six stations rolling,” describes Cronan. **“My kids absolutely loved it.** We [debriefed] afterwards and they felt like I was able to individualize [the content] for them and answer their questions. [Because of the stations] I could hit all of the main areas.”

Cronan also used the stations as a way to **take extra time with students who needed it most.**

Cronan says that learning new practices kept things fresh and fun in her classroom, as well as helped her push her students to achieve. She is confident that other teachers can get the same results.



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After completing her Cohort training, Cronan transitioned to a new role as an instructional coach in Alexander County Schools during the 2023-2024 school year. Now, she gets to bring everything she learned from her Rethink Education training and help other educators learn new ways of engaging their students.

She shared her advice for other educators interested in blended learning: "Don't be scared to try something different! It is so worth it!"

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## FIND OUT MORE ABOUT RETHINK EDUCATION

Rethink Education partners with districts and schools across the state to create a resilient future for North Carolina school communities where all K-8 students have access to seamless, effective blended and virtual learning.

To help meet the needs of all students, whether they are learning in person, at one of North Carolina's virtual academies or in a blended learning environment, Rethink Education provides educator training that goes above and beyond the average professional development.

These professional learning programs not only impart best practices for using the statewide blended learning models, but enable the educators to train their peers on how to use blended learning.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Educators can [learn more about Rethink Education programs online at dpi.nc.gov](https://dpi.nc.gov).
- [Listen to Episode 7 of The Education Empowered Podcast](#), hosted by the Office of Virtual Support at NCDPI and Rethink Education NC.
- Or, reach out to [rethink@ncpublicschools.gov](mailto:rethink@ncpublicschools.gov) for more.



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