

HOW ONE RETHINK EDUCATION TEACHER IMPLEMENTED BLENDED LEARNING TO MORE EFFECTIVELY ENGAGE STUDENTS

Stephanie Craig earned a Rethink Education Facilitator Badge—and it changed her as an educator.

Stephanie Craig, ESL teacher at Elkin Elementary School of Elkin City Schools, has always had a deep passion for her chosen career. She says: “I love teaching. I love being with children. I love helping them learn and seeing that ‘aha’ moment for them. That’s the best part.”

Stephanie signed up to take the Rethink Education Facilitator Badge professional development program. An initiative of the Office of Virtual Instruction Support Services at NCDPI, Rethink Education trains educators on blended learning models so they can use what they learned in their own classrooms—and then go on to train their peers. For Stephanie, this training gave her a fresh perspective of the classroom.

“My journey through Rethink Education changed me as an educator, and it changed the way that I saw teaching,” says Stephanie. “It changed the way I wrote lessons. It changed the way I knew how to teach a child and for them to actually get that ‘aha’ moment.”



1,609

North Carolina educators have earned a Rethink Education Facilitator Badge.

Stephanie isn’t alone in taking what she learned through Rethink Education training and bringing it to life in the classroom. According to a recent survey of educators who became Rethink badged facilitators:



94% are currently or plan to implement some component of blended learning.



58% are already using blended learning directly in classrooms.¹

As an ESL teacher, Stephanie works with multilingual learners, with anywhere between 12 to 30 students in her classroom. This is one group that Rethink Education badged facilitators say especially benefit from blended learning.

She says that she had her own “aha” moment as she was implementing one of the most popular models of blended learning, station rotation. In a station rotation model, small groups of students rotate through a series of learning stations, which usually include at least one offline station, a technology-infused station(s) and a teacher-led station. Often, educators set up all the stations to teach the same concept, but in different ways.

Stephanie uses the station rotation model to evaluate and enhance students’ progress on four domains of English language development defined by North Carolina standards: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Rethink Education badged facilitators say blended learning better serves the needs of students who are:

- Gifted
- Exceptional Children (EC)
- Multilingual Learners
- Out of school for illness, suspension or remote learning²

“To better understand how they’re progressing in their language, I set up three stations for them to move through. I can hear them read, hear them speak and get their thoughts out, and watch them write,” says Stehanie.

Stephanie then added a station where students could listen to a recording of her giving a brief lesson before reaching the teacher-led station—where she could evaluate their progress and adjust learning as needed.

“When switching from being the ‘sage on the stage’ to teaching from the classroom, I saw how many kids I could reach,” says Stephanie. “And it was so much more engaging. Students, especially multilingual learners, need engagement. Any lesson that you write should be engaging.”

Rethink Education badged facilitators say their most used blended learning models are:

1. Station Rotation
2. Playlists
3. Choice Boards
4. Flipped Classroom³



Rethink Educator badged facilitators agree, saying the benefits of using blended learning are:

- Increasing engagement through student ownership of path, place, and pacing
- Supporting small group, individualized instruction
- Enabling differentiation
- Using it in media centers to increase the use of multimedia tools and student engagement⁴

“I see teaching as a craft. You always want to better your craft,” says Stephanie. “Growth without change is impossible. If you’re not afraid to step out of your norm in teaching, it can change you.”

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:

- Visit dpi.nc.gov to learn more about Rethink Education programs.
- Learn more about blended learning models: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6JYMm0YidCkv218KTcojpkNEZ7u0-C6I>
- Explore the Rethink Education 2023 Sustainability Survey results: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/rethink-education-2023-sustainability-survey-results-february-2023/download?attachment>
- Reach out to rethink@ncpublicschools.gov with questions.



^{1,2,3,4} From the 2023 Rethink Education Sustainability Survey, a survey of educators who became badged facilitators

