



Tonda Thompson, an MIT (Mathematics Intervention Teacher) at Albany Elementary in Clinton County is one of seven recipients of the Northern Kentucky University Trailblazer Award for Mathematics Education. She has a dream that all teachers in the state might someday receive the same learning and leadership opportunities that she has experienced through the KCM (Kentucky Center for Mathematics) Community. Tonda describes this community as a “special, supportive, hard-working extended family serving the best interest of ALL our Kentucky children.”

Throughout the past eight years she has implemented new research-based tools and strategies with over 300 students, helping them to forge brighter futures as they become more successful with mathematics and more confident in their capabilities as learners.

Sabra Albertson completed her doctoral dissertation in March 2013 focused on the effectiveness of the mathematics intervention services provided to first grade students by Tonda Thompson. Albertson found “that students who receive Math Recovery intervention make mathematical gains during their intervention year, and those gains are sustained throughout the end of their second grade year.”

Albany Elementary Principal Tim Armstrong declares Tonda is deserving of recognition as she is always at the ready to help colleagues:

“There have been many occasions where Ms. Tonda had gone in and modeled strategies she has learned. Some teachers have shared their frustrations teaching certain concepts and Ms. Tonda would go in the class and model specific strategies.”

Beyond the just-in-time support she provides for teachers in her building, Tonda has accepted many formal leadership opportunities to share her passion and knowledge, empowering hundreds of teachers across her school district and the state, thereby further impacting thousands of students. Tonda’s leadership activities include: training 50 teachers in her school district for using Math Recovery numeracy-focused diagnostic assessments and strategies with all students; training primary grades and preschool teachers from her region in best strategies for early mathematics; presenting at state conferences; and serving as a numeracy development expert for the early mathematics webinar series released by the Kentucky Department of Education in June 2014.

Tonda is inspired by the appreciative comments from teachers she has worked with as she receives ongoing testimony of transformed practice and enthusiastic reports of student success. Tonda is known in the KCM Community as a determined and “can-do” lady with talent and mastery to make mathematics come alive, motivating students to learn and inspiring colleagues to grow professionally.

Tonda’s skill and passion for helping students, her selfless leadership service, and her sharing of knowledge with colleagues are helping to shape Kentucky’s future for the better.