My project this year incorporated the use of e-books and iPods in my classroom. Using these tools in my classroom has pushed me to grow as a digital educator who is capable of guiding my students through our digital world. There have been many opportunities to trouble shoot, create and present ideas. We have had times of triumph and excitement and times of frustration and challenge. My students are pushing the digital boundaries in our school district through their learning.

I was encouraged by the growth my students demonstrated as I looked through my data. Most of my students made progress as readers. I attribute that to the increased amount of independent reading time I incorporated in my day, as well as to the novelty added by the use of both the e-books and iPods. Daily, even with a set schedule, my students would try to make deals with each other or me to “get” the tools to read from. It was very exciting to experience. I was surprised by the lack of growth in the higher reading skills areas of interpretation, metacognition and reflection. Clearly, the data shows that increased time spent independently reading daily did not have an impact on the students’ thinking about reading when considering these higher thinking skills.

Implementing this project was fairly simple, but required me to learn/refine various skills. I had to consider how to manage the tools in my classroom, both with the scheduling of students and maintaining the tools’ power and updates. I chose to do the updating of the tools from home since it was easier to access iTunes and Amazon for downloads. At times, this was a problem because a student would finish a book from a series and would immediately want to dive into the next. Unfortunately, they had to wait until the next day, which didn’t deter them from devouring the book even though they had to wait. I was able to learn how to purchase and maintain a digital library. This turned out to be a simple process. My students learned how to use a “store” website to search for books they were interested in. They had to maneuver through buttons, menus and windows. Our students these days are fast on the computer, but most lack the experience or knowledge to effectively surf the Internet for information. My students gained knowledge in this area.

I plan to continue using both tools to enrich my reading program in the next school year. The skills students learned were invaluable and with this year’s experience teaching and guiding students through this process will add to the experience of my group entering in September. I look forward to continuing my growth in this area as well.