In this spotlight, we’re delighted to feature Michell Craddock, Title 1 Interventionist at Oak Hill Middle School in Fayette County, West Virginia.

Michell shares about her experiences implementing SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) in elementary and middle school settings and using the program in virtual, in-person, and blended learning environments. She also reflects on her participation in a recent pilot of Collaborative Coach, our asynchronous, personalized, online coaching platform.

Tell us a little about yourself, your school/district, and the students that you serve.

My name is Michell Craddock and I am a Title 1 Interventionist at Oak Hill Middle School in Fayette County, West Virginia. I have been a teacher for 21 years and have had the pleasure of working with students from early elementary to high school.

What is the most rewarding part of being an educator for you?

The most rewarding part of being an educator is building and establishing relationships with my students. Having lived in Fayette County most of my life, it is a pleasure to see students grow and progress into productive members of our community.

It is a joy when I can recognize a familiar last name and initiate conversation with a new student by saying, “I had your mom or dad in school when they were your age.” I want my students to know that I am passionate about teaching and that I care about their learning.

How long have you been implementing SIPPS? Tell us a little about your implementation.

I have implemented SIPPS for the past few years. Last year, I instructed intermediate students in grades 3–5. Based on data results from the SIPPS Placement Assessment, I grouped students into appropriate small groups for SIPPS instruction. My Title 1 groups included students in the Extension, Plus, and Challenge programs.

More recently, I transitioned into the middle school setting. Based on the Placement Assessment, I have been utilizing the Challenge program along with incorporating Collaborative Classroom’s Fluency Practice Library.
What do you appreciate about SIPPS?

I appreciate many things about SIPPS. To begin, the Placement Assessment in SIPPS is a useful tool because it gives a specific pathway and program for each student based on their individual responses.

I also value the routines and practice sets. By establishing a set routine and involving all students with choral responses, students are apt to “grow in their mindset.” SIPPS is a very explicit and specific program and therefore it gives results that measure success.

What have you noticed about your students’ learning and engagement?

I have noticed that students greatly benefit from this program. Specifically, they begin to utilize the techniques and routines that are embedded in the SIPPS instruction. The research-based explicit routines and instructional language offer a high-support system for students as they engage in learning.

I have also noticed a shift in student engagement. Students in small groups have more confidence and capacity to participate and excel in their reading groups. They are taking “ownership” over the routines and strategies. I see them utilizing the routines such as “spotting the vowels” and using the sound-spelling posters to validate their thought process when practicing the word work.

How has SIPPS affected or changed your own teaching and learning?

SIPPS has affected my teaching and learning. I have an awareness and clarity regarding the individual strengths and challenges that are unique to each member of my group. This allows me to offer more specialized support and encouragement for the needs of each student.

Teaching reading is a very dynamic and sometimes delicate subject. There are so many specific items that a student must control in order to make reading fluent and master comprehension.

SIPPS has affected my teaching and learning. I have an awareness and clarity regarding the individual strengths and challenges that are unique to each member of my group. This allows me to offer more specialized support and encouragement for the needs of each student.

What advice or insights would you share with an educator who is new to SIPPS?

My advice to educators who are new to SIPPS would be to establish a reasonable timeline for yourself to explore and engage in the online portal. Collaborative Classroom’s Learning Portal is full of rich resources that will clarify the purpose of SIPPS. The online support also contains archives that include teacher video and animations, blogs, teacher resources, and professional development and implementation support.

I truly believe that no matter how many years a teacher has been in the classroom, a “growing mind is a knowing mind.” Therefore, take advantage of these helpful resources and invest in your own learning from time to time. When you grow as a teacher and replant these seeds of knowledge in your students, the ultimate reward is watching them bloom.

Furthermore, SIPPS is adaptable to the challenges we face as educators. This year in particular, when we had to master
educating our students in multiple models, such as virtual, remote, brick and mortar, or blended settings, SIPPS has adapted to meet that need. The online support allows teachers to continue explicit instruction by utilizing the SIPPS materials, including the word sets, spelling-sound cards, and book resources.

**You recently participated in a pilot of Collaborative Coach, our new asynchronous, personalized, online coaching platform for teachers of SIPPS. What might you share about that experience?**

I have many positive thoughts regarding the Collaborative Coach experience. This process gave me the unique opportunity to examine my personal teaching techniques while utilizing the SIPPS challenge program alongside an expert coach.

The individualized feedback was very valuable to me and provided me with direction and support. The collaborative coaching was rewarding and allowed me time to collectively meet and work with a larger group of educators from multiple backgrounds and geographical locations. I feel this enriching experience gave me both professional and personal growth.

***

*Interested in hearing from other educators who are implementing Collaborative Classroom programs? Read more Educator Spotlights here.*