

Introducing Collaborative Literacy

Categories: Reading, Writing

For the past two decades I have been traveling around the country bringing the core mission, values, and programs of our organization-what was Developmental Studies Center and is now Center for the Collaborative Classroom-to schools. In that time, my colleagues and I have learned a great deal about best practices, what motivates students, and about the conditions necessary for powerful learning.

Five years ago we set out to bring together the the things we've come to know about reading and writing instruction. Building on lessons learned alongside teachers and school leaders who used our Making Meaning, Being a Writer, and SIPPS programs, we refined our approach to literacy instruction aimed at helping all students grow as readers, writers, and critical thinkers who learn from and care for one another. We call this approach Collaborative Literacy.

To turn this perspective into an actual curriculum schools can use to implement and scale these best practices, we received generous support from The Einhorn Family Charitable Trust, MetLife Foundation, NoVo Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, who provided our organization with a total of \$11 million to support the development of a comprehensive literacy curriculum and backed our belief in literacy instruction that embeds social and emotional learning (SEL) directly into the work students do in the classroom.

CCC Collaborative Literacy is more than a curriculum, it is also a set of principles and values about literacy instruction. (See my blog about our learnings on early reading instruction here.) These ideas encompass ways to teach reading and writing holistically, and also comprise a suite of materials specifically aimed at to empower teachers in beginning reading, writing, and comprehension and vocabulary instruction.

When teachers use any of the Collaborative Literacy programs, they make their classrooms spaces where students learn cooperatively and build values like responsibility, respect, caring, fairness, and helpfulness. These factors aren't just nice things to teach children, but are fundamental to the way children learn.

Finally, Collaborative Literacy interweaves professional learning into our daily practice. We learn by doing-through our daily lived experiences. Collaborative literacy provides tangible and practical learning experiences teachers use to help their students grow while refining their own practice.

I encourage anyone interested to explore our Learning Hub and set up a free trial so you can see the array of support for teachers and students. You can also see examples of our work in action by visiting our learning resources site-inside.collaborativeclassroom.org-or our YouTube channel.