



# The Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders:

Practitioner Perspectives About Literacy in the Content Areas

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# The Education Alliance at Brown University

## Equity and Excellence for all Schools

Since 1975, The Education Alliance, a department at Brown University, has helped the education community improve America's schools. We provide applied research, technical assistance, and informational resources to connect research and practice, build knowledge and skills, and meet critical needs in the field.

With offices located in Providence, Rhode Island, adjacent to the Brown University campus, and a dedicated team of skilled professionals, collaborators, and partners, we provide service and resources to K-12 schools and districts across the country and beyond. As we work with educators, we customize our programs to the specific needs of our clients.

Our Web site (<http://www.brown.edu/education-alliance>) describes our work and provides extensive information and resources about education reform. Information about all Alliance programs and services is available by contacting:

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The Collaboratory For Adolescent Literacy Leaders:  
Practitioner Perspectives About Literacy in the Content Areas

Through the generous support of the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Education Alliance at Brown University developed the Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL), a program to assist secondary educators in delivering more effective instruction by addressing the literacy needs of their students in content-area classes. The challenge that the CALL sought to address is the need for more engaged and productive reflection of teachers on the effectiveness of their practice—especially in regard to literacy and its impact on student learning. At the heart of this work is an emphasis on practices that set high expectations for all students.

Rather than a prescribed set of lessons or scripted curricula, the CALL asked teachers to become researchers of their own practice. The CALL considered teachers' habits of reflection and self-evaluation as important as their growing knowledge of new strategies for instruction. The theory of action guiding the CALL was that giving teachers access to high-quality professional development and time for reflection would result in more engaged and successful learners in rigorous content-area classes.

We have developed this publication to offer a window into the world of education practice, and we invite you to share the stories of CALL practitioners and schools within your own community.

Maria F. Pacheco, Executive Director  
The Education Alliance at Brown University



# The Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders

## Practitioner Perspectives About Literacy in the Content Areas

### Why Literacy in the Content Areas?

Success in high school, college, and the modern workforce requires mastering high-level literacy skills specific to each content area, such as a historian's ability to analyze the perspective expressed in a primary source or a scientist's evaluation of whether an experiment's results warrant the conclusions. To achieve these outcomes, literacy researchers have argued that secondary school students must learn both comprehension and vocabulary development strategies, as well as literacy-related strategies that vary by content area—allowing learners to access and make sense of challenging discipline-specific content. However, most content area teachers have traditionally not been trained to integrate literacy instruction into their lessons.

### The Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders: An Overview

Through a grant from The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, The Education Alliance at Brown University developed the Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL) program to assist educators with delivering more effective instruction in the content areas and closing persistent achievement gaps among their students.\* Through a combination of job-embedded online and face-to-face collaborative activities, CALL teachers explore research and resources related to proven literacy practices, experiment with new teaching strategies, and create a series of literacy-rich lessons in their content areas.

Over the course of two school years (2012–2014), six schools from urban, rural, and suburban communities in California, New Mexico, New York, and Rhode Island partnered with The Education Alliance to develop a professional learning community of teachers actively integrating proven literacy practices into their content-based lessons. (See Appendix A: *Participating School Profiles and Accomplishments*.) Each school-based CALL team consisted of multiple teachers representing the core curriculum areas—math, science, social studies, and English language arts. Participating with each school team was an instructional literacy coach, acting as team leader, all supported by a school-based administrator. The team leaders' primary role was to support teachers' activities during the year, organize team meetings, facilitate analysis of student data, participate in lesson observations, and ensure that teachers had the tools they needed to successfully complete the work required throughout the professional development experience. The target outcomes for teachers participating in the CALL were to:

- Become familiar with current research on literacy and best practices for integrating literacy instruction into content area subjects.
- Develop content-area lessons that incorporate literacy strategies that meet the needs of diverse learners and improve student engagement and outcomes.
- Become reflective practitioners, evaluating the effectiveness of their

literacy-focused instruction and considering alternative approaches when necessary.

- Act as literacy resources for their team members and for others in their schools, both during and after the CALL.

Throughout the CALL, research briefs and online resources provided foundational knowledge for teacher learning. These briefs and resources focused on student engagement, comprehension, and vocabulary development across the content areas. After initial online discussions of the research readings, participants selected and developed literacy-based instructional strategies that they felt best addressed their own students' needs. They experimented with these strategies, and then developed and taught a lesson that incorporated refined versions of the strategies drawn from their experiments. The lesson was observed by a CALL colleague who offered feedback, and it was video-taped in order for the presenting teacher to receive in-depth individual feedback online from a literacy expert. (See related article *Lesson Observation: A Practice With Promise*.) This cycle of reading and reflection, classroom experimentation, creation of a literacy-rich content-area lesson, lesson presentation and observation, and reflection was repeated at intervals throughout the school year. Each cycle focused on a specific literacy goal, e.g., comprehension, academic vocabulary development, student engagement, or disciplinary literacy.

The technologies employed during the CALL provided participants with scaffolded learning by presenting opportunities for ongoing discussions with literacy experts and with same-subject teacher peers at other sites, as well as with full-time teacher practitioners who served remotely as CALL content-specific coaches. These practitioner-coaches shared valuable insights about how they integrate literacy strategies into their

own lessons, and they supported teachers as they developed their literacy-infused, content-specific lessons.

*Most content area teachers have traditionally not been trained to integrate literacy instruction into their lessons.*

Over the course of the program, participating teachers and team leaders regularly reflected on their own learning and the effects of the CALL professional development activities on practice. Together they discussed approaches for building schoolwide literacy cultures across all content areas and in all classrooms at their sites.

This publication provides a glimpse into the CALL experience, which participants recognized for its attention to rigor and its appeal as relevant to pressing teaching and learning needs.

*\*The CALL expanded on the success of the Adolescent Literacy Collaboratory (ALC), a long term, job-embedded, hybrid professional development model developed by The Education Alliance at Brown University through a federal grant under the Regional Educational Laboratories program. Development of the CALL as a professional development model was based on the work of Allison Brettschneider, Stephanie Feger, Martin Huntley, and Mary Anne Mather of The Education Alliance.*

## Rigor, Relevance, and Changing Instructional Practice

The Collaboratory For Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL) is based on a thorough review of the literature in several areas of study, including: effective professional development; collaborative, peer-based learning communities; and best practice related to content and disciplinary literacy. Regardless of the grounded research base, the CALL developers recognized that for any professional development model to have traction, it must be relevant to teacher needs, must be practical, and must be relatively easy to realistically and readily implement. With this in mind, rigor and relevance played an important role in the development, roll-out, and facilitation of the model in order to successfully influence a positive impact on instructional practice. (See Appendix B: *Application of Literacy Practices in STEM and Humanities Classrooms.*)

### Rigor

- The CALL professional development model was drawn from research-based practices and recognized experts in the fields of collaborative learning, professional learning communities, adult learning, and effective pedagogy.
- Literacy strategies presented to participants were drawn from research-based practices and recognized experts in the field of adolescent literacy.
- High expectations were set for ongoing experimentation, active involvement, and regular personal reflection among participants.
- Ongoing communication with Team Leaders was maintained to ensure teacher participants were provided with structures and support necessary for success.

### Relevance

- The CALL appealed to teachers' immediate needs to raise achievement and/or test scores of underperforming students.
- The CALL appealed to teachers' immediate needs to close achievement gaps and provide educational equity.
- The CALL addressed growing national trends that expect students to navigate and understand more challenging content-focused texts.
- The required informational readings and resources offered practical and easy-to-implement strategies that garnered observable effects on student engagement, persistence, and assignment completion.
- Templates and “how-to” protocols were provided to make it clear and easy for teachers to plan and integrate literacy strategies into classroom practice.
- The CALL focused on practitioner wisdom. Practicing content teachers with many years of experience integrating literacy strategies into their own lessons served as CALL online coaches.
- A focus on collaborative, peer-based learning acknowledged 21st century competencies expected of both teachers and their students.

### For More About the CALL

If you are interested in having your district, middle school, or high school staff participate in the CALL hybrid professional development program focused on building a schoolwide culture of literacy across content areas, visit <http://www.brown.edu/education-alliance> for more details.



## With Literacy at the Center: Professional Excellence and Student Achievement Evolve

*By Bill Clarke, Director, Charter School and  
School Turnaround Office, New York State  
Education Department*

*Bill Clarke formerly served as literacy coordinator at Blackstone Academy Charter School, Pawtucket, Rhode Island and later as the Literacy Facilitator for the Adolescent Literacy Collaboratory (ALC) and Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL), both developed at The Education Alliance at Brown University. He shares a reflection about the efficacy of long-term, job-embedded, collaborative professional development and the importance of a literacy focus in all content areas. He has experienced the efficacy of a professional development model like the CALL both as a participant and as a facilitator.*

“I’ve changed as a teacher,” a former colleague told me during a recent visit I made to her math class. “I would’ve never thought I’d care about reading in my classroom, much less have it as the focus of my instruction.” She paused and surveyed the class. “Look at this.” She was pointing to groups of students settling into learning stations—one focused on math vocabulary, another on annotating word problems, another engaged students in reciprocal teaching on isolating the variable.

The change she refers to was her transition from facilitating a teacher-centered classroom to one where she supports a culture of collaborative learning and measures mastery student-by-student. She credits this evolution in pedagogy to her participation a number of years earlier in a year-long, professional development experience called the Adolescent Literacy Collaboratory, created by Brown University’s Education Alliance.

In the fall of 2003, I joined four colleagues from Blackstone Academy Charter High School in Pawtucket, RI (including the teacher just mentioned) to become part of Brown’s Adolescent Literacy Collaboratory. I served as our team’s leader. Along with 20 teachers from four other middle and high schools across the United States, our Rhode Island-based team participated in an online professional learning community that would not only transform **WHAT** we taught, but also **HOW** we taught. Although my team members were high school content-area teachers, the focus of our work was adolescent literacy. For content teachers of heavily text-based subject areas such as English/language arts, social studies, and biology it was a relatively clear connection. The math teacher was skeptical, but she came along for the ride. It paid off.

Over the months, we met together in person and online with team members from around the country to discuss research and proven practice, share lesson ideas, and commiserate about our students’ learning needs. One of the most beneficial aspects of this collaboration was the mutual accountability that the group imposed on all its members. All participants were required to post comments, lessons, and ideas weekly, as well as critiques of one another’s work. This type of collaboration is sometimes difficult to achieve among teachers who work in the same school because there can exist an unwritten rule that feedback is only for the principal to provide, and criticism from colleagues is considered taboo. Perhaps the distance and relative anonymity online enhanced the level of honest constructive feedback among the Collaboratory participants.

For example, I witnessed online colleagues engrossed in a discussion about how to engage students with a literacy strategy at the beginning of a lesson and then measure their learning at the end. One participant elaborated on how to introduce students to using an Anticipation Guide. Another

suggested using an initial quick-write. A third participant was on board with the use of a literacy-focused entrance ticket to a content-based lesson, but couldn't seem to grasp the importance of an exit ticket or final informal assessment. The participants advocating for the literacy strategies understood the importance of regular formative assessment to inform next steps and to help students assess their own learning. They made a case that swayed the third teacher's thinking about the importance of knowing whether the particular literacy strategy integrated into the lesson helped achieve the content learning goal. You've taught it, but what's the data that shows they learned it? This type of peer-centered, non-threatening critical feedback was commonplace in the Collaboratory...and key to its success.

Inevitably, both the mutual accountability factor and critical feedback expectation spread from our online interactions into our daily work onsite at school. As part of our involvement in the Collaboratory, we were required to observe each other teaching literacy-supported content lessons and to meet monthly as a school team to reflect on the lessons' effectiveness and discuss implications. These work-focused conversations transformed us as teachers and as colleagues. We came to recognize that using literacy-focused strategies to give students access to content is just good teaching—regardless of our respective subject areas. This realization was particularly affirming for team members who had never studied how to teach reading in their teacher preparation programs. It took the heat off. "We're just teaching the way we should be teaching," our science colleague summarized. "Literacy is our centralizing catalyst, and thanks to the Collaboratory, we are aware of strategies that work and how to use them."

## A Measure of Success

I measure the value of professional development, or any learning experience for that matter, by the endurance of its outputs. The day I stepped into my math colleague's classroom was nearly eight years after we had participated in the Collaboratory. She had participated in other professional development since, but it was the orientation and intensity of this job-embedded experience eight years ago that made all the difference for her. And she was not the only beneficiary. Over the last three years, her students have out-performed all other students in Rhode Island on the state's standardized math assessment—the Northeast Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP).



## Collaboration with Literacy at the Center

Small schools like Blackstone Academy can sometimes achieve an informal collaborative peer culture if everyone has the same vision for excellence and what it collectively takes to get there, but this is rarely as successful in larger schools. And even at Blackstone, collaboration was not always sustainable or clearly focused. The Collaboratory forced the Blackstone team to adopt a structure of regular, cross-content meetings focused with a single lens—literacy to access content. Initially, we only discussed Collaboratory assignments and related issues. However, the meetings soon became vehicles for what we came to call the "9<sup>th</sup> Grade Team." During these meetings, we began to generate ideas for whole-school improvement initiatives, to address common concerns we were having across our classrooms, to collaborate on lessons and essential teaching and learning questions, and to share student performance data as evidence of the effectiveness of our newly-developing practice.

Literacy spurred our growth as teachers and as colleagues. To be sure, we learned about and integrated key literacy strategies that moved our students forward—annotation, summarizing, word walls—but we also recognized that these strategies were useless unless they moved students toward content mastery. With literacy always at the center of our conversations, we generated ways to actively engage students in all aspects of the content at hand, as well as ways to measure each student’s understanding of the material. Our professional learning resulted in student learning that we could track and document.

Our team discussions evolved from discussing literacy strategies out of context to first discussing a content standard (what do students need to learn?), moving to assessment (how will we know they learned it?), and then backfilling with instruction (what strategies will ensure success?). We identified instructional strategies that grew from proven literacy practices and that supported grouping and differentiation. Our focus on standards and literacy strategies led to thinking about and assessing mastery.

## Inspiring a Schoolwide Professional Learning Community

The professional learning community our team was part of in the Collaboratory instigated a professional learning opportunity for our broader school-based community. We shared what we were learning at all-staff meetings. These meetings offered structured opportunities for our team to demonstrate literacy-infused content lessons and enlighten our school-based colleagues about the importance of literacy practices and the power of team-based collaboration. It wasn’t long before we were discussing the value and practical application of formative assessments, cross-content planning, and the development of

10th and 11th grade cross-content teams focused on conversations about literacy—the glue uniting all content and all colleagues.

We continued to take the ideas learned during the Collaboratory and share them at our school’s weekly meetings of newly-formed, grade-based teams. Meeting as cross-curricular teams became an important ongoing commitment of our school improvement process. The grade-based team meetings challenged us not to be science, English language arts, social studies, or math teachers. Rather, we were teacher collaborators who shared a goal for students to be able to read, think critically, and persist with challenging standards and difficult text-based material.

This initiative grew into a schoolwide, cross-curricular investigation of learning goals shared across content areas and how to work together to best meet the needs of students we had in common. What we taught became less relevant in our discussions than a focus on student learning potential, and what we collectively needed to do to achieve that potential. We realized a shift in thinking from “this student is not proficient in X” to “what strategy will help this student to achieve standard X?”. The literacy strategies we once found challenging to infuse into content lessons became catalysts for student engagement and improvement. Our work as a professional learning community with literacy at the center helped to transform the classrooms at Blackstone Academy from teaching environments to true learning environments.

## Lesson Observation: A Practice With Promise

*By Linda Kimball, Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL) Online Literacy Facilitator in collaboration with Mary Anne Mather, CALL Co-Developer and Project Consultant*

*Adolescent literacy specialist Linda Kimball reflects on her experiences and beliefs related to peer lesson observation. She offers several success tips, too.*

In the Spring of 2013, I had the pleasure of observing quite a remarkable lesson taking place in a secondary math class. I overheard a student respond to his teacher's question and then immediately ask her for feedback on what "tier" vocabulary he had used in his response. His awareness and curiosity about academic language revealed that his teacher, a participant in the Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL) initiative developed at The Education Alliance at Brown University, had spent time in class actively raising the cognitive awareness of her students about how to be conversant in mathematics. It was clear to me that she was committed to applying the "robust vocabulary instruction" recommended in one of the CALL recommended readings by experts Beck, McKeown, and Kucan\*, and that she had evidence of her students' evolving vocabulary awareness.

As an adolescent literacy coach, I am always thrilled when I can collect these anecdotes first-hand through observation in content classrooms and then share them with other learners. I was able to physically visit this classroom because the school is a relatively short drive from my home. However, as an online literacy facilitator for the CALL, I also have been able to "step into" classrooms thousands of miles away because CALL

participants are required to record and post videos of selected content lessons online for feedback at many different levels.

## The Structure of CALL Lesson Planning and Sharing

The CALL provides a structure for regular lesson sharing among colleagues at the same school, with online coaches, and with colleagues online. This structured approach is an essential element of the professional development model. Participants practice during an initial face-to-face Literacy Institute using easy-to-follow templates that support strong lesson planning, which includes identification of learning goals and methods for evaluating what students learn. The templates also guide notetaking during peer observation and peer feedback delivery.

The most important shared understanding among CALL teachers as they learn to use the protocol is that feedback focuses on the effectiveness of the literacy strategies integrated into the lesson as a means of achieving the teacher's content learning goals for students.

Over several weeks prior to the lesson observation, participants read and respond to selected readings about proven literacy practices and investigate resources that describe various literacy strategies. Some strategies focus on vocabulary development, others on comprehension and the development of disciplinary literacy specific to each content area. Teachers informally experiment with a variety of strategies. They share literacy strategy ideas online and respond to the ideas of others. Conversations revolve around student motivation and helping students take charge of their own learning.



This preparation leads to the development of a more formalized content-specific lesson that integrates selected literacy strategies. An onsite colleague and the local literacy team leader observe the lesson and give feedback. The taped lesson is shared online for review by CALL staff, including the online content area coaches, and the online literacy facilitator. We provide feedback about the lessons in order to generate a rich conversation about best instructional practices designed to enhance students learning. The CALL developers believe in the power of feedback, but not just top-down from a literacy expert. They are committed to providing structure and expectations that engender sharing among peers who can bring a wealth of insight from the field to one another.

## Lesson Observation: Levels of Learning Opportunities

The CALL lesson sharing process offers opportunities for teacher learning at many levels. Over the course of the initiative, we observed varied uptake among participating teachers for the opportunities presented, which include:

1. Getting feedback about teaching from a literacy expert online.
2. Getting feedback about teaching from a literacy leader or administrator at the local site.
3. Viewing how others in their own school teach and receiving local peer feedback.
4. Watching their own lesson videos for personal reflection.
5. Viewing the lesson videos of geographically dispersed online colleagues, especially those in the same content area, to get lesson ideas.

6. Viewing the lesson videos of geographically dispersed online colleagues, especially those in other content areas, to offer peer feedback.

The first two opportunities in the list are the most traditional. Teachers are accustomed to getting comments when taking a course and receiving valued feedback from a professor or recommendations from an administrator as part of an evaluation. Considering the next two, time and opportunity are rarely offered in schools to support the type of peer collaboration and personal reflection described. The CALL forced this to some extent, and as a result, participants enthusiastically responded. CALL participants took advantage of viewing other teacher's lessons to a lesser extent.

As the online literacy coach, I was the person who most closely reviewed lessons and monitored online interaction. I noticed teachers generally commenting on the value of observing themselves and their colleagues teach. Most reported using the classroom observations and videos as a focal point for local discussions about how to integrate and refine literacy strategies across content areas to help their students learn. They found the experience supportive and non-evaluative. When time was provided, the teachers readily came together face-to-face to learn from one another and to adopt and adapt approaches they observed for use within their own disciplines.

One of the participating schools felt that the live colleague observations and comments were much more helpful than watching lesson videos from other districts, and they noted that re-watching their own lessons resulted in the greatest benefit. Furthermore, they felt that the act of videotaping prepared them to be more effective and reflective.

In another school a team leader observed that although the teachers in her school chose not to adopt a common literacy

strategy across disciplines, they did “try out” variations of practices they saw in their colleagues’ videos. One teacher on that team observed that she saw evidence that students were utilizing strategies that they had learned in one discipline as a means for navigating textual information in another class.

In a third school, one teacher observing a colleague’s lesson noticed how he engaged his students through high-level questioning. From this, she realized how limiting her own questioning strategies were and identified adjustments she needed to make for improved teaching and learning. When one team member watched her own video, she was disappointed by her nervousness in front of the camera. However, she was pleased to note that her students adeptly used the literacy strategies she introduced to construct meaning from challenging text.

Perhaps one of the most transforming comments came from the team leader at one school that serves special needs students. She said, “My teachers often ask for videos that demonstrate new practices and strategies. After watching the videos they sometimes say, ‘That’s a nice idea, but it won’t work with our kids.’ When we view the videos of our in-school colleagues and see the strategies working, we are willing to try new things because these ARE our kids!”

No matter which opportunities each school adopted during the duration of the CALL, it was clear to me that the videos and classroom observations played a key role in changing how participating teachers came to think about literacy within their disciplines and that this new thinking now shapes their instructional approaches going forward.

## Acknowledging the Challenges

During the two-year duration of the CALL we have learned much related to the power, potential, and pitfalls of lesson video and review. Admittedly, challenges confronted schools as they recorded, posted, and viewed lesson videos. These included:

- Having ready access to video equipment and microphones to capture student interaction.
- A wide range of technological capabilities within the schools that sometimes required creative problem-solving both for videotaping and then posting the lessons online to the CALL community.
- Scheduling lesson observation time and finding coverage for the observing teacher when schedules did not naturally accommodate for this time.
- Finding time for team planning and discussion after lesson observations.
- Coordinating the online posting of lesson videos along with a complete lesson plan, supporting materials, and evidence that students benefited from the strategies used to meet the lesson’s learning goals.
- Helping teachers understand the value of peer coaching beyond a local viewpoint, and in some cases, convincing teachers that peers at other schools can have as much to offer as experts. For some, this represented a noticeable culture shift.
- Encouraging participants to follow through on a commitment to the members of their professional learning community (PLC) and take the time to give timely peer feedback in addition to simply “taking” ideas.

*[Teachers] reported using the classroom observations and videos as a focal point for local discussions about how to integrate and refine literacy strategies across content areas to help their students learn.*

Each CALL school had to work through its own unique set of challenges, but the results were worth the effort, especially when sufficient time and resources were allocated for teachers to meet, plan, and visit each other's classrooms regularly.

## Tips for Success

Although research supports structured peer collaboration as a proven professional development practice, and most teachers value peer-to-peer learning, schools rarely offer sufficient, regularly scheduled common planning and reflection time. In fact, lack of designated team time was the number one barrier noted by the CALL participants.

So just how do schools provide the time and resources for this kind of observation, discussion, and reflection that can result in successful changes in instructional practice? Administrators are key to supporting the type of staff development that the CALL advocates. These are some of the ways administrators at CALL schools supported and acknowledged their teachers:

- Administrative staff in some participating schools covered classes so that teachers and team leaders could conduct observations, post-observation discussions, and videotape lessons.
- Administrators periodically met with CALL teachers during planning or scheduled team meeting time to learn more about the work and discuss effects on student achievement. By “being there” administrators acknowledged the importance of their team's efforts.
- Administrators worked with CALL teachers and their team leader to design teaching and planning schedules that provided opportunities for teachers to work together weekly as cross-curricular teams.

- One district funded periodic before-school meetings for the CALL team. Buoyed by this show of support, teachers voluntarily met even on days when they were not paid because they valued the meetings and recognized that it was difficult to carve out time during the school day for collaboration.
- Administrators provided opportunities for CALL teachers to present mini-lessons during faculty and department meetings in order to spread a culture of literacy schoolwide.

## A Professional Development Model Worth the Effort

As a literacy coach, I gain powerful learning when I see other teachers in action, and it's no less so for practicing classroom teachers. Teachers have “a-ha” moments when they see one another's pedagogy in action and witness first-hand the impact of the instructional practices on student learning.

Peer observations are especially powerful when colleagues have the time to analyze what they have seen, share insights, and plan how best to implement new ideas in their own classrooms. Finally, and most importantly, students benefit from the teachers' “a-ha” moments. Their literacy skills improve and serve as access points to academic content and higher achievement. In my experience, it's transformative professional development at its best.

\* Beck, Isabel L., Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan. *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2002. Print.

## Measure What You Treasure: Data Guides Progress Monitoring

*By Mary Anne Mather, CALL Co-Developer  
and Project Consultant*

*Mary Anne Mather serves as Senior Facilitator for TERC's Using Data Project, a partner of the National Data Center initiative. She reflects on her experiences and beliefs related to the importance of progress monitoring and using data for meaningful change.*

At the beginning of the Collaboratory for Literacy Leaders (CALL) program, core-subject teachers (math, science, social studies, and English language arts) and their cross-content literacy team leaders completed a participation application. We asked them simply: what do you want to get out of this?

Their goals were lofty and broad. These samples capture the cohort's admirable anticipated outcomes of their professional development efforts:

*...learn strategies and techniques that can help my kids become more proficient at reading complex articles and papers.*

*...help students make sense of difficult text to the point that they can converse and write about their ideas with confidence.*

*...build my repertoire of research-based literacy strategies that will make a difference with struggling students.*

All CALL teachers focused on learning new strategies to help students to access, understand, and communicate academic ideas. Many discussed looking forward to professional collaboration as a way to gain a better understanding about integrating literacy into their specific content areas. And all team leaders expressed hopes of

expanding their own knowledge in order to assist the teachers on their teams with reaching their literacy-related goals.

It is not unusual in any reform effort for people to focus on the “doing” of the reform more than monitoring its impact. To help the CALL participants focus equally on the important process of progress monitoring, the program provided multiple levels of scaffolding. These included assessment-related team tasks and meetings, progress monitoring and reflection templates, online coaching to prompt for identifying success indicators, regular conference calls, and periodic webinars to showcase teacher progress.

### Where are we?

Teachers are usually aware of what students can't do or don't know in their classes, but do they always know why? By taking the time to understand why, practitioners can better pinpoint specific strategies and changes in practice with the potential to help students “do” and “know” more.

Because the CALL focused on literacy, we asked team leaders to facilitate a review of the school's English language arts standardized test scores with the cross-content team members—an activity rarely undertaken outside of the English department. The CALL team members were able to glean some general information about existing student skills and needs related to comprehension and vocabulary. In turn, this better informed their selection of literacy strategies to incorporate into content lessons.

*In any continuous improvement initiative, it's important to monitor progress in order to understand what is working and to guide adjustments as needed.*



## Where do we want to go?

In any continuous improvement initiative, it's important to monitor progress in order to understand what is working and to guide adjustments as needed. All CALL participants completed a Personal Progress Monitoring Plan, drawing first from the broad initial goal stated in their applications, and fleshing it out by describing observable indicators of success that would demonstrate progress toward attainment of those goals.

The CALL emphasized a broad definition of success-indicator data, such as changes in instruction, changes in team collaboration and professional discussions, changes in student engagement and persistence with learning tasks, and increased student comprehension of the concepts explained in subject-area readings. Most importantly, participants understood that the data were not evaluative, but rather a kind of roadmap to help them track progress and assess if the anticipated effects of their lessons were on track or needed adjustment.

## How do we know we are there?

The CALL teachers began to regularly integrate simple informal assessments into their classes to assess student understanding and inform next steps. These check-ins helped them determine if the literacy strategies they used were having the desired effect on student learning.

Through data that CALL participants shared in their ongoing discussions and progress reflections, two levels of change emerged:

- *Changes in pedagogy and practice*  
Teachers regularly integrated literacy strategies into their content lessons and discussed outcomes with colleagues, reflecting on refinements for using them in the future. They began to present students with more challenging texts than they had in the past and spent time building academic vocabulary and comprehension skills to ensure that students had success with the material.
- *Changes in student engagement with text*  
Teachers noticed increased student persistence with tasks involving reading and discussing texts. Students were overheard specifically naming a literacy strategy or asking for advice about which of several strategies to use for a given assignment. Teachers also observed students applying literacy strategies learned in one content class to readings assigned in another class.

Initially, getting teachers to comply with the progress monitoring requirements of the CALL was a greater challenge than getting them to change classroom instruction and practice. However, as they came to actively observe the effects of their literacy-infused lessons, it served to acknowledge a job well done and well worth the commitment, time, and effort they each had invested for the sake of improved student learning.

*These strategies help to place more of the onus of learning on students, and teachers begin to build a more student-centered learning environment.*

## Participant Reflections on Professional Growth

*During the two-year duration of the CALL program, teachers shared rich commentary and “a-ha” moments through their ongoing online conversations with both literacy and content coaches and geographically dispersed colleagues. The comments centered on refined pedagogy, professional learning, rethinking roles, and shifts in practice. They were peppered with observations about their students’ reactions to new text-rich lessons and explicit exposure to strategies that ensured successful completion of more challenging reading and writing tasks related to disciplinary content.*

*In order to capture the spirit of self-acknowledged professional growth through voices from the field, CALL participants were invited to reflect on their perceptions as CALL Cross-Content Team Members and Team Leaders. These are their stories.*

## Teachers Need Coaches Too

*By Gerri Lallo, CALL Team Leader*

*Gerri Lallo is the literacy coach at the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex (JSEC) in Providence, Rhode Island. She served as the leader of her CALL Cross-Content Teams and liaison with the school’s administrators.*

“So, what do you actually do?” This is a common question people who are not in the education world ask when I tell them I’m a Literacy Coach. The funny thing about this question is the assumption that teachers should already know everything about teaching, shouldn’t they? It seems odd to an “outsider” that Instructional Coaches, Math Coaches, or Literacy Coaches not only exist, but also fill a much-needed role.

I say this is funny, because it is much like the assumptions we make about students as they progress through the grade levels and reach our grade with less than optimal skills. Teachers in elementary grades assume students should have alphabet and number sense from pre-school or lower primary grades; in middle school we assume they should have grasped foundational knowledge, the fundamentals of writing, and study habits from elementary school; in high school we assume they should already know how to do just about everything and only need to be taught content-specific knowledge. What I have discovered in my tenure as a Literacy Coach is that most of us make a lot of assumptions about students, and we spend quite a bit of energy lamenting over what skills students do not have, instead of what our own instruction can do to impact their growth.

The CALL program gave all of its participants the forum and opportunity to really take a look at how literacy practices can play a significant role in impacting student growth and achievement in core subject areas. As the CALL Team Leader at my school, it was incredibly rewarding to see my team members have “a-ha” moments related to the impact of, what were at first glance, seemingly insignificant pedagogical shifts.

Thinking back on my own time as a classroom teacher, I see now that I was often guilty of “winging it” and not paying enough attention to very strategic lesson planning. As a reading teacher and a humanities teacher, I was always integrating literacy strategies, but perhaps not in the most complete and thoughtful way to get optimal results. Looking through the lens I have now as a literacy leader, and through my work in the CALL program, I am more convinced than ever that most effective literacy strategies simply translate to thoughtfully planned and executed instruction.

The greatest moments of reflection and revelation that my CALL team members experienced came after they had carefully planned their instructional time to ensure that the class period had purpose, relevance, rigor, and clarity of expected outcomes—along with the scaffolds needed for students to reach them. Sometimes a lesson included an explicit literacy strategy very strategically orchestrated into the presentation in order to help students access selected text. Other times the lesson might introduce a mechanism for relinquishing more control of the learning to the students or establish an accountable-talk protocol for large or small group discussion. On the surface, not all of these would be considered literacy strategies per se, yet they all can have a profound impact on classroom engagement, access to content, and learning. I think the term “literacy strategy” is often misunderstood. It does not always imply “reading strategy.” Literacy includes comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, listening, speaking, questioning, writing, and interaction with disciplinary concepts. And for our purposes in the CALL, literacy does not mean the encoding or decoding (phonics) involved in the act of reading.

In a secondary school setting I think this last distinction as critical to combat the often lamented, “I am not a reading teacher. I am a content teacher.” Correct, a high school history teacher is not and should not be expected to be a “reading teacher.” However, there IS an expectation that all teachers employ effective and appropriate instructional strategies in order to deliver content in a way that bridges the comprehension and/or knowledge acquisition gap for students. Very often, this means using literacy strategies to give students access to content.

Sometimes teachers ask, “Does the implementation of literacy strategies slow down learning?” Yes and no. In my experience, learning doesn’t actually slow down; it increases in depth and rigor. In the beginning, pacing may slow down when students are being taught a literacy strategy to help them access and comprehend content. However, as these strategies are continually used with fidelity, consistency, and across all content areas, they become a habit of mind. Students grow to employ them internally, independently, and with greater efficiency. They learn how to select a particular strategy for a particular purpose. They utilize them with automaticity, the way we do as adults. The “lost time” at the beginning of the year is more than made up for later when students can engage in deeper learning, with increasing levels of comprehension, and less time spent on re-teaching or remediation.

I wish I could convince all the teachers I support that perseverance is key when making instructional shifts that at first seem to slow down coverage of material. Initially, students may whine, protest, and take a while to adopt literacy strategies as a matter of practice in the classroom. However, these strategies help to place more of the onus of learning on students, and teachers begin to build a more student-centered learning environment. In our rush to get through content, we take on way too much of the teaching *and the learning* for our students.

What do I do as a Literacy Coach? I instruct; I model; I co-teach; I observe; I offer feedback; I cheerlead. I have convinced the CALL participants at our school. They now actively plan instruction infused with literacy strategies that put their students in charge of their own learning.

## Literacy – The Tie That Binds

*By Kim Clawson, CALL Team Leader*

*Kim Clawson is the literacy coach at Red Bluff High School in Red Bluff, California, a rural area in the northern part of the state. She served as the leader of her CALL Cross-Content Teams and liaison with the school's administrators.*



When I started recruiting teachers to attend our first Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL) Team two years ago, I knew it would be a hard sell. I was asking teachers to:

- 1) Miss the second week of the new school year—a time when they establish classroom routines, build rapport with students, and unique to this particular year, introduce our new Common Core State Standards curriculum,
- 2) Join three other cross-discipline teachers who they do not usually meet with to form a team and explore how to incorporate reading and writing strategies into their respective content classrooms, and
- 3) Spend a week attending a face-to-face literacy training held on the other side of the country—an 8-hour plane ride away from the comfort of families and their own beds.

Needless to say, I did not find a line of teacher volunteers beating down the door to sign up.

With my work cut out for me, I approached the first teacher optimistically. “How would you like to be a part of literacy team and fly to Rhode Island in August?” I could tell I lost him with the “L” word, and would never convince him once I used the three-letter “F” word (fly). He informed me that he didn’t read, or fly. He told me that everything he needs resides in a 30-mile radius of his home. After several similar conversations

that ranged from, “Who, me?” to “Not me!”, a team was assembled, plane tickets purchased, hotel rooms reserved, conference calls made, and substitute plans readied. We were on our way!

We left rural California literally burning with forest fires and temperatures over 100 degrees, and arrived in Providence, Rhode Island, a city of skyscrapers mixed with hundreds of years of American history. We were here to work hard and welcomed the opportunity to play hard, too. We took a train to Fenway “Pahk” in “Bahstin” and had our “pitchah” taken with “Wahlly” the Green “Mahnstah.” From Boston to Cape Cod, we took advantage of our time on the east coast to enjoy the culture...and to bond.

After full days of training, collaborating, and planning with our content area colleagues from across the country, we looked forward to evenings where we could better acquaint ourselves with one another. These were the people who taught the same students we did, walked the same halls, and faced the same challenges of infusing lessons with literacy strategies. When we returned to California, we knew that together we’d be persuading the same teachers who had declined the invitation to travel to Rhode Island to do the same. We knew that when we returned home, our success for building a schoolwide literacy culture live in the people who sat beside us on the train headed to the Red Sox baseball game and who walked beside us on the beaches of Cape Cod.

During the four-day CALL Literacy Institute, our literacy vocabularies grew (Word Wall, Frayer Model, KIM's Vocabulary), and our bonds strengthened. We helped each other navigate eLearn, the online learning environment we'd be using during the year to stay connected, share, and receive coaching. We sought out each other for ideas as we developed lesson plans for observation, then recorded and uploaded videos. We had frank conversations about instruction. We understood that many of the strategies we were learning know no content boundaries. Marking up text works in a science class as well as it works in a social studies class. Graphic organizers have universal appeal as a way for students to access text in any subject.

We came to understand that reading and writing instruction is not solely the role of the English teacher, but is most effective when taught by the expert in each content area. After the initial apprehension of taking on this new responsibility passed, teachers felt empowered with these new tools in their repertoire. Rather than viewing literacy skills as another layer of content added to their instruction, they found that teaching literacy strategies within the context of a lesson provides scaffolding for students to more easily access content.

After completing two years with the CALL initiative, we now have eight teachers, approximately ten percent of our staff, trained and implementing literacy strategies into their daily lessons. These eight teachers also serve as teacher leaders within their departments for monthly professional development focused on literacy. Without the structure, strategies, and practice provided by the CALL, literacy instruction would be very different at Red Bluff High School. As we prepare for Common Core assessments this spring, we are confident in our abilities to teach the critical thinking skills necessary, not only to perform well on the next test, but to help our students

become more objective and engaged participants in a democratic society. Participating in the CALL forced us to work outside of our respective, content-focused comfort zones. We experimented with new strategies and teaching methods and allowed others to sit-in on lessons and witness us risk individual failure for the greater good of our team, our school colleagues, and our students. Eating peanuts together at Fenway Park might have gotten us started, but, today, literacy is the tie that continues to guide our work and bind us together.

*What we were looking for from CALL was the structure—that was most helpful for us. The lesson plan templates, the guided questions as we were developing the lesson plans, the team meetings, observation forms — all of those things were helpful in terms of guiding our experimentation.*

*The nice thing about doing the CALL was letting others into your classroom. It wasn't threatening or scary. We were only there to help and to look at literacy strategies being implemented — that was it. The feedback was really appreciated.*

Kim Clawson  
Team Leader and Teacher Librarian



## Since CALL, Craig Dorsi's Literacy Transformation

*By Craig Dorsi, CALL Team Member*

*Craig Dorsi is a high school social studies teacher at Channel View School for Research in Far Rockaway, Queens, New York. He was a member of their CALL Year 1 Cross-Content Team. During that year, the wind and floods of Hurricane Sandy severely damaged the school and interrupted classes. In spite of this, the school remained committed to the CALL program.*

If you measure the efficacy of the CALL program by the number of posts I made online, I am a poor participant. If you measure the efficacy of CALL by a dramatic and lasting change in my pedagogical philosophy and practice, then I am one of the stars. I have been teaching social studies for almost 15 years, and up until participating in the CALL, I was good at blasting ELA teachers for not doing their jobs. I was frustrated by the inability of my students to successfully access and understand the concepts presented in content-focused readings that I used in my lessons.

The CALL begins with a four-day, face-to-face Literacy Leadership Institute, followed by a year of online technical assistance and coaching for the participating team. During the CALL Literacy Leadership Institute, I was exposed to simple-to-understand and easy-to-execute literacy strategies with proven results. The experience changed the way I began to think about my teaching. Following the face-to-face Institute, I began to use the strategies I had learned by introducing them to my students during mini-lessons as a prelude to the social studies lessons I planned. By the second year of applying the literacy strategies and concepts shared during the CALL, the "line" that separated

literacy instruction and my social studies lessons disappeared. I have become a literacy teacher who teaches social studies.

I recognize the success of my change in practice. It is evidenced by my students' growth in literacy as well as their engagement with social studies content. I no longer blame ELA teachers; we are now linked in a joint effort to tackle literacy issues. Not too long ago during a social studies lesson, a student asked, "Can I use the close reading strategy we learned in ELA, or should I use the annotation strategy you taught in social studies?" My reply, "We are in this together. All your teachers are working to provide you with learning tools. Try out all of them, and then choose the one that works best for you."

A program like the CALL supports a collaborative approach to adolescent literacy. It provides concrete examples of literacy strategies that are supported by theory and research, but most importantly, teachers see them as practical and easy to implement. In addition, it supports a structure where practitioners can learn from one another. Supported by our school's literacy coach, I continue to share my experiences and successes with my colleagues in the social studies department and other faculty who did not directly participate in the CALL professional development. In my opinion, if you provide an opportunity like the CALL to teachers, you can expect to see professional transformation. I can attest to my own!

## But This is Math Class!

*By Travis Price, CALL Team Member*

*Travis Price is a special education teacher at the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex (JSEC) in Providence, Rhode Island. He is a Teach For America teacher who has co-taught in math, science, and humanities classes at*

*JSEC. During Year 1 of the CALL Program, Price was a team member focused on literacy in the math classroom. During Year 2 he served as a peer coach at the face-to-face CALL Literacy Leadership Institute and throughout the year for colleagues at his own school.*

“But this is math class!” was the outcry from more than a few students when my co-teacher and I asked our Algebra 2 class to read an article about population growth in India. From our standpoint, the article had everything to do with the math concepts we were teaching, and their connection to the real world. The students didn’t see it...not yet, anyway.

As a special educator, I have had the privilege of teaching in a variety of content areas. In my three years at the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex, I’ve co-taught biology, British literature, and Senior Advocacy (a research/social studies course), in addition to numerous math classes, including Algebra 1, geometry, math models, Algebra 2, and even a virtual math course. Though the subjects vary greatly in content, they have at least one crucial thing in common. In all of my classes I have noticed the ways in which deficits in reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition hinder my students.

While it became apparent to me early in my teaching career that literacy transcends content area, students are not always accustomed to thinking in such an interdisciplinary manner. Seldom have they been asked to read in math class, and the fact that many students across our school read well below grade level means that, for teachers, it can seem a futile task to spend time introducing challenging texts and expecting students to read them—even in science and social studies classes.

Our response to the protesting math students was that, when you put math in a real-world context, reading inevitably forces

itself into the picture. Even on the Math NECAP, the high-stakes state exam our students take during their junior year, the few sentences that precede a math problem are crucial to understanding the problem itself, and can trip-up our students.

My participation in the Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leadership (CALL) through The Education Alliance at Brown University has given me the tools to do something about supporting improved literacy in the content areas. I now have the confidence and practical knowledge to purposefully implement literacy strategies into my lessons, regardless of the content area—and regardless of any protests from students. Let me acknowledge that, to their credit, my students have rapidly adapted to my new approach.

## What Does Literacy in the Content Areas Look Like?

When I co-taught biology we introduced a summarizing activity called “Get the Gist” that forces students to capture the essence of a text in a limited number of words. At first, students complained the activity was too difficult, but as we continued to use it on a regular basis, my co-teacher and I were overjoyed to discover that the class was at its quietest and most focused during the times students worked on their summarizing skills. In that same class, we developed a strategy to help students navigate their high-level textbook, demonstrating the different sentence structures the textbook used to define key words, and giving students ample practice in recognizing the structures and how to extract meaning.

Meanwhile, in Algebra 2, I was surprised when a different co-teacher, inspired by my work with the CALL, asked for help developing a mini-unit on systems of equations with a heavy emphasis on literacy

skills. The unit incorporated multiple real-life examples focusing on sustainability and choices we make as consumers. Each day, students read an article and then demonstrated their understanding through mathematical calculations. For example, in one instance they read about hybrid cars and were able to mathematically set up equations and compare the total costs of a traditional car that runs on gasoline to a hybrid alternative.

More recently, I introduced a unit on imaginary numbers by having students read a text about the concept and answer questions explaining their origin. Not one student said anything about the fact that we were reading in math class. Rather, as a class they fell silent and combed through the text. At this point, many of my students are now able to successfully tackle readings like this on their own because of the time I've spent explicitly guiding them through other texts using comprehension and vocabulary strategies. The literacy tools are now part of their own reading arsenals.

The most enjoyable aspect of the CALL program for me, aside from the gains I have seen in my students, is being a part of a network of teachers from across the country, working together, experiencing the same difficulties, and learning from one another. Hearing about the progress being made by our colleagues in New Mexico, for example, is both instructive and inspiring. Our literacy team at Juanita Sanchez now totals six teachers who are able to expand on the support of our school's official Literacy Coach. We are like peer ambassadors for very important work that impacts student achievement.

I'm excited to see literacy strategies beginning to spread throughout our school. At some point in the not too distant future, I hope all students, teachers, and administrators will come to see reading in math class—in any class for that matter—as the rule rather than the exception.

## Voices From the Field: CALL Team Leaders Share Insights

*By Stephanie Feger, Program Specialist, The Education Alliance at Brown University and Project Manager for the Collaboratory for Adolescent Literacy Leaders (CALL).*



*When Year 2 of the CALL program commenced, Stephanie Feger interviewed the school-based CALL team leaders. In most cases, these individuals were the designated literacy coaches for their schools, although in one case the team leader was a teacher colleague. All agreed that participating in the CALL greatly enhanced their effectiveness as literacy coaches and peer mentors because it offered a structure to create a shared vision across content areas and concrete activities that led to achieving that vision. It required each school to make time for focused collaboration and reflective practice, something the teachers greatly valued. One Team Leader summed it up in this way, "The richest part of the experience was when the four of us sat and talked about teaching methods, struggles, and successes. We heard things from one another that we would never have otherwise communicated."*

*The Team Leaders responded to questions about classroom practice and professional growth:*



**SF: Can you share any “a-ha” moments teachers discovered as they integrated literacy strategies into content area classes? What has changed for teachers or students?**

**Gerri Lallo**, *Literacy Coach, Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex (JSEC), Providence, RI*

One a-ha that came out of our team discussions was how much students struggle with comprehending challenging text and what it takes to really give students the tools to tackle content at this level. I heard teachers say things like, “Wow, I experimented with a strategy I thought would work well when I introduced a reading. I didn’t think it would be this challenging for students to understand how to complete the task.” Teachers began to understand how much practice and scaffolding it takes in the beginning before students internalize the strategies and use them automatically.

**Kim Clawson**, *Literacy Coach, Red Bluff High School, Red Bluff, CA*

I don’t know if this was true in other schools, but the math and science teachers at my school did a better job of incorporating literacy strategies that tied back to a specific content standard or learning goal. I think that since reading comprehension plays a more obvious role in the humanities, the social studies and English teachers thought they were already focusing on literacy in their classes. Consciously including new literacy strategies into lessons was more of a paradigm shift and more of a struggle for them than it was for math and science teachers. I would not have predicted this!

**Kerri Walsh**, *Literacy Coach, Channel View School for Research, Far Rockaway, Queens, NY*

I had a similar experience. In the beginning I heard my humanities teachers say, “Wow, did you see what they’re doing in math?” It

was an eye-opener. In our school we verbally acknowledge that everybody is a literacy teacher, but then we don’t take action. Since his involvement with the CALL, my social studies teacher has planned and facilitated a comprehensive writing unit in his classes, and he’s seen improvement in his kids’ work. It’s so exciting to hear him talk to the other social studies teachers about what he’s doing. They’re all doing it now.

**Stewart Paley**, *Reading Specialist, South Valley Academy, Albuquerque, NM*

My biggest a-ha moment came from having the opportunity to observe the different styles of four really good teachers. We came to realize that although all the strategies we were learning about had efficacy, some strategies work better for certain teachers. I believe you need to be aware of many strategies and have the ability to select those that fit you as a teacher and fit the learning needs of your students. We did a pretty good job of finding time for people to observe each other. It’s one thing to know a strategy, and another thing when you see it in action.

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*With our special education population, we have students who are reading, writing, and performing significantly below grade level. Since using these literacy strategies, we have seen an increase in motivation and engagement and in actual instructional performance.*

– Lindsey Hoyt, Team Leader and Instructional Coach

## SF: Improving teaching and learning takes time. Was there a moment when you observed a breakthrough in pedagogy or student learning?

**Carmella Prusko**, *Questar III BOCES, Sackett Center, Castleton, NY*

As a team of special education teachers, we are so used to modifying the text for our students to ensure that they can experience success. One of our takeaways came from listening to the feedback of our online colleagues who encouraged us to give our students the chance to read higher-level texts, while providing them with the tools to succeed. Our students are required to take the state Regents' exam, which does not offer modified text, so this made sense. Yet, we were nervous.

In the beginning, we didn't get the results we hoped for, but we kept at it. By mid-year, we were able to expose our social studies students to primary source documents and position papers. With our guidance, the students were able to do close readings of these more challenging texts when they worked in collaborative groups. This was a huge a-ha for our teachers. Our principal loved it!

Students felt really great about the work they were able to do. They are aware when we modify text for them, but in this case they were proud that they could read the "real" text. In order to transform our practice, we had to acquire enough confidence that the literacy strategies we used would work. And we had to trust our students enough to be willing to allow them to struggle with the learning process. We saw that students began to take more ownership for their learning and pride in their accomplishments.

The proof came in the testing. After the first year of the CALL we had several students who passed the Regents' exams without special needs accommodations. This was a first for us. We were so happy, and so was the administration.

**Gerri Lallo**

What Carmella just shared is noteworthy. We have this adversity to letting kids struggle, so we spoon-feed them. This is a difficult teacher habit to break. With rising expectations and more rigorous national standards being imposed on us, we can't do that anymore. We can't continue to give students the simplified text anymore. The paradigm shift comes by asking the question, "How are we going to help students successfully access challenging texts and high-level concepts in the content areas?" It's a monumental shift.

**Stewart Paley**

Most of our kids are second language learners who struggle with reading. Our core teachers came to realize how hard it is for these students to read and comprehend tough text. A really good moment was when our teachers realized that their students needed to have a stake in their own learning. It's not all up to the teachers. They started to probe students by saying, "It's not enough to say I don't get it, I'm lost, I don't understand. What don't you understand about this? Is the vocabulary unfamiliar? Is it the way the text is written? Is it that you don't understand the concepts, not the words?" I think having this kind of conversation was really empowering for our students and our teachers—for both groups to realize that each of them has some responsibility in the learning process and has the power and opportunity to make it better.

**SF: Opinions differ about whether lesson observation, including videotaping and feedback should be part of teaching practice. Based on your experience with the CALL program, what do you see as benefits? How have your teachers responded to lesson videos and feedback?**

**Kim Clawson**

The requirement to videotape lessons, observe one another, and offer constructive feedback provided a structure for something we should be doing anyway as part of our professional growth. We should be getting into other teachers' classrooms to learn about practice by observing practice. I think it was very effective.

**Carmella Prusko**

I agree with Kim. Our teachers noted that one of the best aspects of the CALL was the opportunity to see their colleagues teach. They found it illuminating to see some of their own students in different contexts with different teachers. Although the videotaping process was a little time consuming, teachers felt it kept them on track, since they knew someone would be observing, and they didn't want to look bad. Teachers really enjoyed having the recorded lesson. Every one of them watched their own tape and had reactions such as, "I really liked this segment, but what was I doing here?" It was a powerful self-reflection tool. After facilitating a lesson, you often remember only certain aspects, and you don't have a grasp of the whole picture. Additionally, you miss some of the reactions of individual students. Watching the lesson gives you new perspectives on your practice and its impact on students.

Having the videotapes also gave us a resource arsenal of exemplars to show other teachers. In the past, when they watched a

video on You Tube, they might say, "Oh, those kids are not like our kids. In these videos, they ARE our kids."

Initially our teachers were very hesitant to sign the video release form. The videotaping and lesson observation during the first CALL cycle was a big production, but by the second cycle we had worked out all the kinks, and it was routine. They changed from saying, "We're not doing that." to "It's the best thing!"

**Stewart Paley**

I preferred watching my colleagues live, rather than a video, and I was lucky enough to have the time and opportunity to do this. For me it just felt more immediate and personal. My teachers had mixed feelings about whether collegial feedback about their lessons was helpful. But they all agreed that it was instructive to periodically videotape yourself and look at your own lessons.

**Gerri Lallo**

My team members took time to watch their own lesson videos, too. In the beginning you tend to watch yourself, rather than how your students react to the lesson. Some of the teachers said things like, "I look so mean. Is this the way my kids perceive me?" (Even though they perceive themselves as very approachable.) Many asked to borrow the camera again to videotape themselves beyond the requirements of the CALL and see if they successfully changed certain aspects of their pedagogy or lesson delivery. I felt the experience was very enlightening—very, very powerful. Due to scheduling, my team members didn't get to observe one another as much as I would have liked.

I think the success of any teacher observation lies in setting expectations. I prep teachers by prompting them to look at the students and their engagement, rather than judging the teacher's performance. We focus on comparing what was intended in the lesson versus how it was received. It's

great to have another set of eyes taking in the effects of the lesson. If you're in a class of 28 kids, you don't always notice everything students are doing and saying. In the lesson debrief, details come up that you would never have known about. I'm a proponent. It's invaluable.

#### **Kerri Walsh**

We struggled the most with finding the time for teachers to observe one another and videotape lessons. After hearing what others have to say, it's the piece I want to work on more in the future. I think that teachers know what they hope to accomplish in a lesson. If they can get feedback on whether or not their goals were met, it can really benefit their practice.

**SF: What have you learned about promoting literacy to other educators at your school and district? How do you generate excitement for this type of work?**

#### **Stewart Paley**

Since our CALL team members sometimes had colleagues covering their classes in order for us to have CALL team meetings, we felt as if we owed it to them to share what we were learning during that time. We periodically shared quick information about specific literacy strategies we had used and how they worked. The other teachers really liked having something concrete to try out and especially liked knowing that it had worked for someone else. Before too long they asked for monthly presentations. The peer-to-peer sharing was effective, and I really liked that the push for literacy in the content areas wasn't just coming from me.



#### **Carmella Prusko**

Our CALL team members from Sackett Center were so excited about their work, and it's results, that they talked about it all the time. Their enthusiasm was contagious and spread to others who overheard them during faculty meetings and in the hallways. In turn, these teachers would ask questions and then go back and give it a try in their own classrooms. It was so powerful coming from the CALL teachers, not just me as the literacy person. I've teased that I'm going to put them on the road as literacy ambassadors.

During Year 2 of the CALL we created our new team from Rensselaer Academy, one of the other Questar III sites. Literacy work continues at the Sackett Center and has spread.

**SF: Many CALL participants have also commented on how individual team members regularly share with content colleagues during department meetings. This type of informal collegial exchange expands the role of a school's literacy coach and spurs the growth of a literacy-focused culture—a culture of literacy that promotes more equitable learning opportunities and achievement for all students.**



## Appendix A

### Participating School Profiles and Accomplishments

#### I. Channel View School for Research New York, NY – grades 6-12

**Enrollment:** 646 students  
(62% free/reduced lunch)  
**Student Race/Ethnicity –**  
Black 50%  
Hispanic/Latino 31%  
White 12%  
Asian 6%  
Other ~1%  
Special Education – 14%

**Number of Faculty:** 49  
**CALL Participants:** 7

#### School Description

Channel View School for Research is a combined middle/high school located in the Far Rockaway section of Queens in New York City. According to the administrative team the majority of Channel View students are passing the State English Regents exam, however many students are not reaching mastery. Student reading levels were described as “middle of the road” with the majority of students scoring at level 2 (Meets Basic Standard) or 3 (Meets Proficiency Standard). With state tests and the Common Core Standards moving toward reading informational texts, the Channel View team noted that their students need to be better prepared for these changes.

#### School Goals & Literacy Needs:

- Expand literacy instruction into content area lessons.
- Develop a sense of shared vision for literacy as an instructional approach across content areas.

#### Team Leader’s Summary of School Impact Teachers:

- Consistent use of literacy strategies in content area classes.

- Content area teachers have become teachers of literacy and have developed a toolbox of approaches that are used to support students with a focus on content area vocabulary.
- Collaboration among grade level faculty to share and use common literacy strategies has expanded through inquiry meetings.

#### Students:

- Students have become more successful in reading and writing in content area classes and use literacy strategies on their own, not only when they are being taught.
- Improved writing in content areas.
- Students are transferring strategies that they learned from one class to another, and they are hearing teachers use similar language to describe instruction.

#### Whole School:

- Ninth grade team has become more aware and focused on the importance of literacy in their subject area.
- The focus on literacy expanded to the 10th grade team during second year of CALL and is being extended to 11th and 12th grades and to the middle school grades.

#### Strategies for Success:

- You need to be very clear about the time commitment, and there needs to be time set aside whether that is during the school day or after school paid time set aside for the team to meet.





- It is critical to get people who are interested and understand the commitment they are making to fully participate.
- Administration buy-in and support is important, whether by attending team meetings or observing what teachers are implementing in the classroom.

#### **Future Planning:**

- We have to leverage the experts that we have now—the teachers who participated.
- Getting other teachers to observe lessons where they see literacy in action will make a big difference moving forward.
- We are talking to department teams and will get more targeted as we go, and we are trying to build capacity and get other people to take on leadership roles too.
- It has always been said that everybody is a literacy teacher but not everybody feels they can be a literacy teacher. The Common Core is forcing that and the strategies we received from CALL have really supported teachers in feeling that they can do this.

## **II. Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex** Providence, RI – grades 9-12

**Enrollment:** 642 students  
(86% free/reduced lunch)  
**Student Race/Ethnicity**  
Hispanic/Latino 77%  
African American 13%  
Asian 3%  
White 4%  
Special Education – 12%

**Number of Faculty:** 58  
**CALL Participants:** 7

### **School Description**

Located in South Providence, Rhode Island, the Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex combines the former Providence Academy of International Studies and the William Cooley Academy of Health, Science, and Technology. Over the last two years between 45-60% of students scored below proficiency on the state reading and writing assessments. Approximately 90% of ELL students scored at levels 1 and 2, indicating that students are partially or substantially below proficient in English language arts. Juanita Sanchez has been identified as a transformation school and is moving to implement reading comprehension strategies in every content area course.

### **School Goals & Literacy Needs:**

- Help content area teachers embed effective literacy practices into their instruction.
- Decrease the number of all students scoring substantially below proficient in Reading on the state NECAP assessment.

### **Team Leader's Summary of School Impact**

**Teachers:** One of the main benefits was in integrating academic vocabulary into instructional learning objectives, especially in math and science.

**Students:** CALL teachers often had students being actively engaged in the text in some way. It is slowly becoming a habit of mind—they are not just passively reading. There is always a lot of resistance from students at first, they don't want to read and mark text—it takes a lot of perseverance. Right now this is still too isolated and it has not spread to enough of our student body.

**Whole School:** Embedding literacy is initially going to slow things down, but if you have done this and everybody does this then students pick that up and it becomes their habit. It is a matter of doing it and following through to see that it works.

#### **Strategies for Success:**

- The number one factor is the ability of the team to meet in a dedicated committed environment with no interruptions. This is a priority.
- The selection of teachers and support of the principal, along with a dedicated meeting time makes a huge difference.

#### **Future Planning:**

- We are only at the beginning of making the shift to the Common Core. As our teachers involved in the CALL moved forward some of the rigor around writing has improved. I did see teachers working around multiple texts, and synthesizing information to put into an essay. I can see where there is an absolute direct connection and it would serve our purposes if we dove a little deeper into those anchor standards for literacy.



**III. Questar III BOCES  
Sackett Center and Rensselaer Academy**  
Castleton, NY – grades 6-12

**Enrollment:** 35 students  
(49% free/reduced lunch)  
**Student Race/Ethnicity:**  
African American 9%  
Hispanic/Latino 0%,  
White ~91%,

Asian 0%,  
Special Education – 100%  
of students have IEPs.

**Rensselaer Academy:** 52 students  
(86% free/reduced lunch)  
**Student Race/Ethnicity**  
African-American 25%  
Hispanic/Latino 10 %  
White 63%,  
Asian 0%,  
Other 1%  
Special Education –  
100% of students have IEPs.

**Number of Sackett Center Faculty:** 19  
**Number of Rensselaer Academy Faculty:** 45  
**CALL Participants:** 11

#### **School Description**

Questar III is an educational cooperative providing shared instructional and support services to schools in Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene counties in the state of New York. The John Sackett Center and Rensselaer Academy of Questar III serve students with disabilities from over 30 different districts. Students are working toward a Regents level diploma. Student achievement scores are mainly in level 2 (Meets Basic Standards) and 3 (Meets Proficiency Standards). The schools are seeking to modify the curriculum and integrate similar literacy strategies in each classroom. The administrative team has allocated 3 hours per week to meet and focus on literacy across the content areas.

#### **School Goals & Literacy Needs:**

- Identify literacy strategies to focus on as a whole group and to implement them in daily instruction.
- Shift from focusing just on behavioral support to a more academic focus aligned with the Common Core Standards.

#### **Team Leader's Summary of School Impact**

**Teachers:**

- Created a professional learning community (CALL PLC) that improved communication between teachers and empowered a sense of collective responsibility for students.
- Implemented a continuum of literacy strategies across all content areas aligned with the Common Core.
- Provided opportunities to observe and learn from colleagues' instruction.
- Increased focused on academic vocabulary and experimentation with using authentic texts.
- CALL lessons aligned our practice to teacher evaluation rubric, and promoted peer and self-reflection.
- Developed and implemented formative assessments to drive instruction.

**Students:** Students may be performing instructionally below grade level but they are getting grade level content and we are setting the expectations high for them. And they are succeeding and doing well and rising to our expectations. We set the bar high and it has been nice to see the students step up to what we expected.

**Whole School:** We have reached out to other schools. I'm in three different buildings and teachers ask what strategies they can use in their classrooms. Even elementary teachers are asking. During our teacher meetings once a month we present a strategy and we give them the templates and show them what we are doing. It is definitely moving throughout the organization. All of the administrators know what we are doing. It is very well known what CALL is and what we're doing with it in the organization.

**Strategies for Success:**

- Having a common planning time and also emailing teachers frequently provides a structure. Document meetings with an agenda and distribute meeting notes. Creating this focus really helps the team.
- It takes time to see things work. In some lessons it might flop once or twice but it would work the third time. It takes time and patience to see the outcome but it's worth it.
- The administrator plays a vital role within CALL with scheduling. Getting administrators on board with the strategies really allows them to see the benefits and see that the teachers are more effective.

**Future Planning:**

- We like the format of the PLC and we will continue our meetings around that structure. It has allowed us to come together and talk as educators, and the organization is looking at ways to continue this by giving us time to meet.
- We have also talked about how teachers from one school can be mentors for those in another school still in the early stages of integrating literacy strategies.
- CALL has been the first step in diving into the Common Core. With CALL we now look at the standards and use the standards to teach. We have learning targets for each grade level. We look at the skills and choose literacy strategies that align with the content and the standards. So really we are using the standards to drive instruction and it gives us a backbone from which to start.



#### IV. Red Bluff High School

Red Bluff, CA – grades 9-12

**Enrollment:** 1304 students  
(60% free/reduced lunch)  
**Student Race/Ethnicity**  
White 69%  
Hispanic/Latino 25%  
Asian 3%  
African-American 1%  
Special Education 11%

**Number of Faculty:** 80  
**CALL Participants:** 9

#### School Description

Red Bluff High School is located in the Shasta Cascades area of northern California. Results from the California standards test, show that 55% of Red Bluff students are below proficient in English language arts. Red Bluff administrators have noted that improving student achievement and increasing awareness of the value of education as key challenges for their school community. Red Bluff is developing a new school wide plan that ties literacy into both core and non-core subjects and is looking to establish in-house expertise of peers teaching peers.

#### School Goals & Literacy Needs:

- Extend grassroots efforts to integrate literacy across the curriculum by incorporating a structure to guide lesson development and teacher collaboration.

#### Team Leader's Summary of School Impact Teachers:

- Implementing peer observation and supporting each other as a team to look at literacy strategies and provide feedback
- Accountability and cross-curricula connections built literacy expertise on campus.

*Many of our content area teachers felt that literacy was the English teacher's job and that kids should know these things when they came to them, rather than their teaching it as part of the content area as well. So it was about exposing the content area teachers to literacy strategies so that they could then use them in the classroom*

*Students are seeing the connections because teachers are making connections for them, but they are also making them on their own so that something they learned in one class they can use in another.*

*I think this is something we always wanted to do it just wasn't getting off the ground. When you have teachers who are excited about something and they are seeing the improvement with their students and they are seeing a difference in how their students are handling material or reacting to material they get excited and they start to spread the word too.*

– Kerri Walsh,  
Team Leader and Instructional Coach  
– Channel View School for Research

**Students:** Students are developing a repertoire of tools that they can access. What works in science can work just as well in social studies. I think that familiarity of the students with the strategies and techniques is helpful....so we are reinforcing a few strategies instead of rolling out a hundred.

**Whole School:** For us, just being able to have the expertise, to know a little more and having experimented with those [literacy] strategies has increased the confidence of our teachers. They have been given leadership roles on our professional development Monday each month – there is one day per month set aside for literacy.

### Strategies for Success:

- Time—time to get together and have team meetings. Team leaders need time to connect both one on one with teachers, and with teachers as a team.
- Principal participation is useful to provide a realistic sense of what the work entails and teachers' commitment to it.

### Future Planning:

- Teachers will continue to be leaders and we will look to them as experts. They are credible, have great ideas, and have leadership roles.
- We know what we have to do, how do we get there? We see the island, but where's my boat? CALL really provided that means of transfer to the next step of how we get there with some strategies as to what it looks like when you do it. For example, here's what to expect from a student response.
- We knew that the Common Core Standards were asking us to do more and I had been working with non-core teachers helping them to integrate literacy strategies. The core subjects were dealing with the challenges in incorporating common core, and literacy was the last piece that they needed to incorporate to fit it all together so they could move forward.

### V. South Valley Academy

Albuquerque, NM – grades 9-12

**Enrollment:** 240 students

(93% free/reduced lunch)

**Student Race/Ethnicity:**

Hispanic/Latino 98%,

White ~1.0%,

Other ~1.0%

Special Education – 10%



**Number of Faculty:** 25

**CALL Participants:** 9

### School Description

South Valley Academy is a college-preparatory public charter high school located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. According to the South Valley administrative team, the school is committed to making sure that their students are able to go to college. Approximately, 75-80% of students speak Spanish as their first language. Most 9th grade students enter the school reading below grade level, and literacy limitations affect student achievement in the core subjects. The administrative team is looking to systematically use formative assessment and reading rubrics, with an aim toward looking for consistency in implementing practices.

### School Goals Literacy & Needs:

- Educate and inform content teachers on ways they could improve literacy practices within their classrooms.

- Learn new ways to reach some of the most struggling learners, especially those for whom English is not the first language.

#### **Team Leader's Summary of School Impact Teachers:**

- Teachers gained an understanding of the process and challenges of reading that their students face, and it allowed them to better understand students reading difficulties.
- Teachers also acquired different strategies and tools to work with students.

**Students:** Students are more comfortable and they realize a lot of people have challenges and you don't need to sit idly by without the ability to grow. Many, not all, of our students are now in the growth mindset, rather than the fixed mindset of I can't read very well.

#### **Whole School:**

- Eight teachers have been trained in literacy and attended CALL. These teachers are using literacy strategies on an everyday basis and are aware of literacy challenges and are feeling more comfortable with that. For the broader faculty we have about twenty-five teachers at our school and it has moved literacy to the forefront of everybody's mind.

#### **Strategies for Success:**

- Keeping things on track requires having school time to work on literacy, as opposed to finding time. This can be designated time every week, or every two weeks, as long as it is designated time.
- Recognizing that people doing this are interested and motivated and they are taking their own personal time in addition to designated time. Recognize the effort of great teachers.
- You will learn a lot of ways to help students overcome reading challenges, but you are not going to walk away after a week or two weeks or even six months

with a silver bullet. You are going to learn ways to better help students but you have to realize that you will have to put work into this just as students will have to work to get there.

- At the beginning I liked that there were a lot of questions about whether the school supports this, or will your administration back you. Without having the school behind you I don't see how people can do it.

*The CALL gave us amazing resources to use. It was a jumping off point for dialogue among teachers in our school and with teachers outside of our school.*

– Gerri Lallo,  
Team Leader and Instructional Coach

#### **Future Planning:**

- We know that we need to increase the literacy level of our students. Being involved in CALL wasn't the start of our journey for lack of a better word. We have been focusing on literacy for a while. CALL gave us a great push forward and we know we have to continue.
- Common Core seems to be all about reading and writing, and reading at a higher level, much more challenging text than we are used to seeing on standardized assessments. Some of the text I'm pretty surprised at; it is very high level, very challenging. So anything that you can do with literacy is going to help you with Common Core.

## Appendix B:

### Application of Literacy Practices in STEM and Humanities Classrooms

#### Application of Literacy Practices in STEM

#### Science

Lesson Overview	Content Goals & Objectives	Literacy Strategies
<b>Physical Science</b> 9th grade Jennifer Gable South Valley Academy Cycle 1 - 2012	Students will know the age of the Earth. Students will be able to identify and evaluate evidence used to determine the age the Earth. Students will be able to identify main ideas in a complex text. Students will be able to write a 15 word or less summary of the text.	<b>Anticipation Guide</b> – prompts students to agree or disagree with statements about the history of the Earth; share opinions with group of statements. <b>Directed Notes</b> – used to mark up text; help clarify anything that was difficult to understand based on text. <b>Word Wall</b> – students generate words from text to create word wall for topic. <b>Ticket Out</b> – students cite evidence for the age of the Earth, and a 15 word or less summary of text.

#### Keys to Success

Students were engaged with article.  
 Anticipation Guide helped them gear up.  
 Guided reading questions gave purpose to reading.  
 Students read at different levels—having extension readings for higher readers could help them stay engaged.  
 Students generated their own word-wall—group conversations helped build understanding of text and vocabulary.

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<b>Biology</b> 9th Grade Will Masse Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex Cycle II - 2013	Students will be able to explain and create examples of genetic engineering. Students will use text-dependent questions to identify key ideas in a passage and cite evidence to draw conclusions.	<b>Video</b> – used to model answering the text dependent questions. <b>Gallery Walk</b> – student poster session to review examples of genetically modified organism; students read posters to answer text-dependent questions and demonstrate they understand the example in the text. <b>Closing Activity</b> – students are given a sentence frame they fill out in order to combine the traits of two organisms.
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**Keys to Success**

Gives students opportunity to clarify concepts.

Gallery Walk gets students moving, and exposes them to several examples in groups.

Closing Activity used to see if students understood the concept of genetically modified organisms based on their readings.

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**Mathematics**

Lesson Overview	Content Goals & Objectives	Literacy Strategies
<b>Algebra 1</b> 9-12th Grade Pablo DelRosario Juanita Sanchez Educational Complex Cycle I – 2012	Students will solve compound inequalities and graph their solution set. Students will graph the solution sets of compound inequalities and interpret if the solutions are viable.	<b>Anticipation Guide</b> – used to assess student prior knowledge. <b>Think Alouds</b> - give students opportunities to express their ideas when completing their tasks.

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**Keys to Success**

Anticipation Guide was useful to pre-assess and activate student prior knowledge and show misconceptions.

Think Alouds are very powerful especially as students become more comfortable with them. Once they realize it is okay to make a mistake in their Think Aloud it can help clear up any misinformation they have.

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**Integrated Math 1**

9th

Dan Penner

Red Bluff High School

Cycle II - 2013

Students explore the use of exponential equations in real world situations to see the application of mathematics. Students develop exponential equations to model the value of two different types of cars: one that appreciates in value and one that depreciates. Math modeling is the focus of this lesson.

**Close reading** – students individually read word problem text and underline the significant information and box the question, followed by a discussion of why they thought those specific items were significant.

**Cornell Notes** – used to clarify and extend concepts; students then create their own questions that demonstrate their understanding.

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**Keys to Success**

Satisfied with the effectiveness of the method-almost every student had input into the discussion. Students were able to cite evidence from the text and see how it can be applied into the mathematical model.

Students consistently caught significance of words like increasing and decreasing coupled with those numerical values.

## Application of Literacy Practices in Humanities

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**Social Studies****Lesson Overview****Content Goals & Objectives****Literacy Strategies**

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**Global Studies**

10th Grade

Joal Bova

Questar III

Cycle I - 2012

Students identify how the Enlightenment influenced the American Revolution and the new government of the US. Identify people who were influential to the founding of the United States.

**Anticipation Guide** – pre-reading strategy, students are presented with statements related to the topic and asked to agree or disagree citing evidence.

**Directed Notes** – a during reading strategy, the main focus has been on identifying unfamiliar vocabulary.

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**Keys to Success**

Anticipation Guide helped create a productive discussion environment, students were more engaged. Directed Notes helped students develop responsibility for their reading, students asked if they could mark up a text before the assignment to use Directed Notes.

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## Social Studies

### Health

9th Grade

Javier Garcia

South Valley Academy

Cycle II - 2013

Explore the dangers of convenience food and the issue of personal responsibility over obesity.

**T-chart** – during reading strategy used to help students identify statements that support two opposing viewpoints.

**ACE response** – after reading strategy used to help student organize their thoughts coherently and structure a compelling viewpoint.

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### Keys to Success

T-Chart is a nice strategy for sorting, storing information that could easily evolve into a Discussion Web. It shows students how to critically evaluate viewpoints, draw conclusions. ACE response asks students to provide evidence supporting their opinions in writing and is a good way to check on student learning while giving the class choices.

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## English Language Arts

### Lesson Overview

### Content Goals & Objectives

### Literacy Strategies

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### ELA

11th Grade

John Sheffield

Red Bluff High School

Cycle I - 2012

Reading selection and the literacy strategy are part of a unit on *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The reading “What to the Slave is the 4th of July?” and activity shows students how to analyze non-fiction for purpose and rhetorical strategies, specifically tone. This will be achieved through using SOAPStones.

**SOAPSTone** – students use this strategy to help break up the text into a series of components that show them how to analyze non-fiction for purpose and rhetorical strategies, specifically tone. Students identify the 3 or more different tones (emotions) that the speaker expresses.  
**Exit Ticket** - Students present their findings using a completed SOAPSTone and exit ticket.

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### Keys to Success

After trying the SOAPSTone strategy first with AP students, was able to refine it to use effectively with general level students. Exit Tickets promote immediate collection of data regarding student understanding. These simple slips help inform planning lessons that follow.

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**ELA**

9th Grade

Samantha Vollmar

South Valley Academy

Cycle II - 2013

This lesson reviews how to use textual evidence in writing about an informational text. Students have researched Pakistani schoolgirl, Malala Yousafzai, and six other teenagers who are making the world a better place. Students are working on paragraph writing and using textual evidence in a paragraph correctly and effectively at the end of this unit.

**Pass This Note!** – This strategy used during reading helps students use textual evidence to support their opinion, making sure to cite evidence.

**Formative assessment** of students' ability to use multiple sources

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**Keys to Success**

When formatively assessing students in class, I could see that many students benefited from seeing a correct example from a peer written above.

While the lesson mainly focused on writing skills, students engaged with multiple texts and practicing critical thinking.







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