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What Does Building Collaborative Literacy Mean in the Classroom?

Dorothy A. Sisk



Melanie was an early reader, first mimicking commercials on television at the age of three to the amusement of her parents, then pointing to items in the grocery store that she recognized, including milk, cookies, and strawberries, telling her mother in which aisle the items were located. When she began kindergarten, the teacher focused on colors, numbers, and the alphabet. At home, she stopped reading, and openly voiced her opinion that the other students didn't like her. Her very wise mother took Melanie on her lap and explained that she was like an explorer who went places others didn't, like Columbus, and that sometimes people don't understand explorers. Melanie sat quietly reflecting on that statement, then tearfully asked her mother why she hadn't told her sooner, because she thought something was wrong with her.

Melanie's mother shared this incident with the teacher, who suggested that she talk with the Gifted Child Coordinator. Melanie was assessed and identified as a highly gifted student. The coordinator arranged for Melanie to work with a group of first- and second-grade students in a pull-out session for reading. In collaborative literacy lessons, in which the children read stories and used higher level thinking questions and activities, with an emphasis on making connections to self and others, Melanie began to be "her old self." She eagerly looked forward to her reading session and once again began reading her favorite fairy tales at home.

This chapter explores the concept of collaborative literacy, its relationship to the transactional theory of reading, and implications of Vygotsky's theory to collaborative literacy. We introduce characteristics of advanced readers and gifted students like Melanie and examine the research base for collaborative literacy. We discuss Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), a strategy that fosters collaborative literacy, and the role of the teacher in building collaborative literacy. We also discuss collaborative literacy with parents, with suggested activities for parents to use at home to support literacy. A section on Ideas in Action includes the Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R) framework, the parallel curriculum, and novel study through drama. We discuss collaborative literacy programs in cooperation with universities and colleges as an example of collaborative literacy efforts in the community. To further explore the use of collaborative literacy, we share ideas for teachers in a section called "Teachers Putting Ideas into Action."

The chapter goals are to

- Build an understanding of the concept of collaborative literacy
- Develop awareness of the importance of the transactional theory and its relationship to collaborative literacy
- Develop an awareness of Vygotsky's contribution to collaborative literacy
- Develop awareness and knowledge of learning characteristics of advanced readers and gifted students
- Develop knowledge of research-based strategies that complement collaborative literacy
- Develop an awareness that collaborative literacy involves students, teachers, parents, and communities
- Develop awareness and knowledge of three strategies and program adaptations that illustrate collaborative literacy in action

COLLABORATIVE LITERACY

Collaborative literacy as used in this text builds on the ideas of Rosenblatt (1978), who described the process of reading as a carefully orchestrated relationship between the reader and the text in a social situation. Collaborative literacy can be simply defined as the use of multiple strategies to engage the readers in a group setting. For gifted students, who are quite social by nature (Frasier, Garcia, & Passow, 1995), this approach builds on their needs and characteristics in the reading process. Situational conditions to be considered for engaging students in collaborative literacy include time, location, mood, pressures, reasons, intents, and purposes, all of which interact to influence a reader's selection of reading strategies. Rosenblatt identified two purposes for reading, efferent and aesthetic. She defined efferent as readers focusing attention on information that they gather, retrieve, or remember while reading a text. An example of efferent reading focusing on remembering is when students read to prepare a report on a novel or to write a book critique.

Aesthetic reading, the second purpose for reading, is when the reader builds on past experiences, connects these experiences to the text, enjoys the beauty of the text, and becomes enthralled in the text as an active participant. A wonderful example of an aesthetic experience is middle-school students reading *Hope for the Flowers* by Trina Paulus (1972), in which two caterpillars named Stripe and Yellow experience following the crowd, in this case a crowd of caterpillars. They begin to ascend a climbing pillar of caterpillars, only to find after a horrific struggle that there is nothing at the top. When middle-school students read the last page, they often sit quietly reflecting on the story, thinking about the significance of the story as it relates to their interactions with others, particularly when Stripe says to Yellow, "Did you ever notice how difficult it is to step on someone's face when they are looking at you?"

RELATIONSHIP OF COLLABORATIVE LITERACY TO THE TRANSACTIONAL THEORY OF READING

Collaborative literacy is based on the transactional theory of reading, which stresses that the social and situational context for reading influences the types of reading tasks to be introduced. There is a dynamic interaction among context, the reasons for reading, the types of text included in the reading, the purposes for reading, and the strategies that the reader uses. Transactional theories of the reading process, introduced with the work of Dewey and Bentley (1949), stress that the reader, the text, and the social or situational setting all interact during the reading process. These theories suggest that students learn to actively construct meaning from positive encounters with texts, building on their own experiences along with the information on the printed page. For gifted students and advanced readers, this is a dynamic interaction that can be maximized in collaborative literacy.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE VYGOTSKY THEORY FOR COLLABORATIVE LITERACY

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), a Russian psychologist and educator, stressed that cognitive development is greatly affected by language learning and its use with others in society. He maintained that thought and language in the mind of a child grow out of interactions with others, and then when children are in social situations, they use language as a tool to explore their world. Vygotsky describes cognitive development in terms of how well a child could perform a specific task in collaboration with others; he called this the “zone of proximal development.” The zone of proximal development can also be defined as “that which students can do in collaboration, they can later do alone.” Gifted students and advanced readers can work together, and with other students, and become engrossed in challenging tasks that engage them in higher levels of understanding and performance. According to Vygotsky, they can then accomplish this performance independently.

Vygotsky (1978) stressed that students as learners internalize language activities, including reading and writing, in a three-stage process. Internalization begins with the student observing others, in some cases watching his or her teacher or parent or other students, as they perform a language task. In the second stage of internalization, the student mimics the language task, such as when a young child holds his or her favorite book, reads the text as the parent did, and sometimes pretends to be reading. The third stage of internalization is when the student can perform the task independently. Internalization stresses the importance of the teacher or parent modeling the process, and students in collaborative literacy modeling the process for one another. Vygotsky’s theory calls for a child-centered and activity-centered approach to literacy, which enables the reader to use language as an exploratory tool.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ADVANCED READERS AND GIFTED STUDENTS

Advanced readers can be defined as students who enjoy reading, make time to read, identify themselves as readers, define reading as a way of life, view the purpose of reading as entertainment, have aesthetic transactions with reading, and have positive feelings about other readers. Beers (1998) called these students avid readers. Leu and Kinzer (2003) reported that students who are gifted demonstrate exceptional performance with most cognitive and linguistic tasks, and that teachers first recognize gifted students by their precocious language use.

Gifted students have a broad fund of information and often talk about topics well in advance of their age-mates, and the manner in which they speak is often quite mature. Many, but not all, gifted students are early readers. Silverman (2003) listed a number of learning characteristics of giftedness that affect collaborative literacy: early or avid reading ability, long attention span, excellent memory, extensive vocabulary, rapid learning ability, compassion for others, and good problem-solving/reasoning abilities. Silverman conducted

Figure 1.1 Silverman's List of Characteristics of Giftedness

Good problem-solving/reasoning abilities	Preference for older companions
Rapid learning ability	Wide range of interests
Extensive vocabulary	Great sense of humor
Excellent memory	Early or avid reading ability
Long attention span	Concerned with justice, fairness
Personal sensitivity	At times, judgment seems mature for age
Compassion for others	Keen powers of observation
Perfection	Vivid imagination
Intensity	High degree of creativity
Moral sensitivity	Tends to question authority
Unusual curiosity	Shows ability with numbers
Perseverant when interested	Good at jigsaw puzzles
High degree of energy	

several studies between 1981 and 1986 (reported in Silverman 2003) to determine the validity of a set of characteristics of giftedness, and the original list has been refined to incorporate these research findings.

Silverman (2003) said that if a child demonstrates more than three-fourths of these traits, it is likely that he or she is gifted. Rogers (1986) found the following characteristics to clearly differentiate the development of 38 gifted and 42 average third- and fourth-grade students at the .01 level of significance: rapid learning ability, extensive vocabulary, good memory, long attention span, perfectionism, preference for older companions, sophisticated sense of humor, early interest in books, ability in puzzles and mazes, maturity, curiosity, perseverance, and keen powers of observation.

RESEARCH BASE FOR COLLABORATIVE LITERACY

The research base for collaborative literacy is evident in the Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R) project implemented by Reis (2004). SEM-R uses the Type III strategies of the Renzulli (1978a) Triad model for enrichment in reading to provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently to improve their reading. The research project, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education Javits program, found significant differences on pretest and posttest measures in fluency of students in second, third, fourth, and fifth grade, and significant differences in attitude toward reading and comprehension. The SEM-R is an extension of the original Renzulli (1978b) Triad model, a well-known and successful enrichment program for gifted students.

Several pretest and posttest instruments were administered to the students, including the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the Reading Comprehension Subtest, and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (McKenna & Kear,

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1990). In addition, pretest and posttest reading fluency was assessed by asking the students to read three brief passages for a period of one minute in a pretest and posttest format. The sample included a total of 240 students in third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. Students were randomly assigned to an experimental group to receive the SEM-R framework, and to a control group who continued with the traditional afternoon remedial reading program being implemented in their school, Success for All (Slavin et al. 1992).

The research project was implemented in high-poverty urban schools in which over 90% of the students qualified for free lunch. Reis (2004) found that talented readers, as well as average and below-average readers, benefited from the SEM-R intervention. Significant differences were found on the ITBS at the .02 level of significance; significant differences were found on pretest to posttest scores on the Attitude Toward Reading Scale at the .04 level, and significant differences were found on pretest to posttest measures of reading fluency.

Collaborative literacy calls for the use of multiple strategies that engage the learner in highly motivating group activities such as Readers Theater and Book Club Discussions. The research base for collaborative literacy indicates that the more motivated readers become, the more likely they are to eagerly engage in collaborative literacy strategies and to work harder at building personal meaning and improving their reading achievement. Motivation influences the interest, purpose, emotion, and persistence of the student as they engage with texts (Butcher & Kintsch, 2003; Schallert & Martin, 2003).

A STRATEGY TO FOSTER COLLABORATIVE LITERACY: COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC READING (CSR)

Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR) is a structured comprehension strategy that can be used with expository text (Klinger & Vaughn, 1999). It involves four strategies that students experience in small groups. Klinger and Vaughn suggest that the teacher function as a facilitator to monitor the process of the group. Monitoring is necessary to get a group of students oriented to the strategy; however, very quickly small groups of four or five students can work independently, taking on the specific roles suggested by Klinger and Vaughn. These roles include the leader, the “clunk” expert who looks for hard words that the

Figure 1.2 Collaborative Strategic Reading

CSR Strategic Reading		
Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
Brainstorm	Find hard words (clunks)	Summarizes
Predict	Use fix-up strategies	
	Generate new questions	
	Find the “gist”	

Figure 1.3 Four Strategies of Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR)

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- Use the before-reading strategy of reviewing students prior knowledge and set purposes
 - Monitor one's reading by using the "clunk" strategy
 - State the main idea or "getting the gist"
 - Use the after-reading strategy of summarizing and generating questions
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group may not know, and the "gist" expert who is responsible for focusing on the abstract idea or the most important points of the text, such as the most important idea, person, place, or thing.

Klinger and Vaughn suggest that CSR be initiated with a before-reading text activity that would involve the students in brainstorming knowledge that they have about the topic and predicting what they think they will learn, or, with advanced readers and gifted students, what they want to learn. The opportunity to do prereading activities helps ensure that students share their previous knowledge and that all of the students are better able to start CSR with similar information. The after-reading strategy that Klinger and Vaughn suggest calls for the teacher to ask questions to check whether the students understand the text and can answer the questions identified in the prereading activity. However, for the advanced readers and gifted students, the after-reading activity could consist of questions such as: What else do we need to know? And what new questions do we want to explore?

Role of the Teacher in Collaborative Literacy

The teacher's role in collaborative literacy is to provide instruction on essential reading and writing skills; provide a variety of stories and poems for reading; design learning centers in which the students can use their literacy skills in a variety of real-world situations; model reading and writing behaviors; offer caring and useful guidance on when to use specific reading skills and strategies; and, most important, create a learning environment that actively engages the students in collaborative literacy in reading and writing with other students. Figure 1.4 indicates the role of the student.

Figure 1.4 Role of the Student in Collaborative Literacy

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work cooperatively in small groups • Using higher order thinking skills to identify key concepts in textual material (efferent) • Make connections to oneself (aesthetic), enjoy beauty of textual material • Identify areas of interest for further independent or small group study • Engage in creative/expository writing |
|---|

(Continued)

Figure 1.4 (Continued)

- Respond to textual material (books)
- Engage in discussions using higher order thinking
- Infer and connect concepts
- Ponder with depth and from multiple perspectives in discussions
- Anticipate and relate observations in journals

Collaborative literacy makes use of direct and indirect strategies, as illustrated in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5 Direct and Indirect Strategies

Direct	Indirect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture • Practice/Recitation • Strategy-based instruction • Coaching • Concept building • Demonstration • Socratic questioning • Guided visualization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synectics • Role playing • Cooperative learning • Simulation • Inquiry-based learning • Problem-based learning • Mentorship • Independent study • Independent investigation

Successful collaborative literacy activities have an essential framework that the classroom teacher can follow. Figure 1.6 shows a teacher checklist suggested by Ryan (2003) that has proved helpful.

Figure 1.6 Teacher Checklist for Successful Collaborative Literacy

- Are there specific objectives for the activity?
- Were the objectives designed collaboratively by the students and the teachers?
- Are the instructions for the group activities clear and concise?
- Are the students tolerant of differing points of view, and are differing points of view sought in the activities?
- Do all students have equal access to the materials and text needed for the activities?
- Are all students engaged in interactive activities such as trust building, conflict management, and the use of constructive criticism?
- Is there time for self-reflection in the collaborative activities?
- Is there sufficient time for the students to complete the objectives?

Collaborative Literacy with Parents

Parents can be active participants in collaborative literacy activities, such as planning and implementing reading and writing activities and instruction for their children. In schools that use collaborative literacy with parents, parents supervise classroom centers, tell stories about their families, read books aloud, and model the use of reading and writing.

Parents are a rich source of information concerning their children, particularly about the child's individual perception and attitude toward reading. Many gifted students and advanced readers are frustrated by having grade-level limits imposed on their choice of reading material. Advanced readers or gifted students frequently are capable of reading stories well beyond their grade level. Ideas can be gathered from parents through interviews, questionnaires, home journals on literacy activities, and parent focus groups.

Parents can work with small groups of other parents to plan activities that can be implemented as after-school experiences in which parents and students can co-create memory books and photo albums and engage in creative writing and poetry.

Tracey (2000) suggests a number of activities that parents can use to encourage and support literacy experiences at home:

- Encourage your child to talk about what you are reading to him or her
- Help children understand the story by encouraging them to describe the story in their own words
- Praise your child when he or she asks a good question or makes interesting comments about a book
- Relate the book to your child's life by talking about interesting things the book reminds you of that really happened
- Ask questions that begin with why and how
- Wait for answers, allowing the child time to think of a good answer
- Point to the words as you read with younger children
- Take turns while reading with older children
- Carefully choose books that are not too easy or too difficult
- Have fun and make reading together an enjoyable experience

Collaborative Literacy Schools in Cooperation with Universities and Colleges

Ohio State University has developed a University Literacy Collaborative as a long-term professional development program designed to provide a comprehensive, schoolwide approach to literacy instruction in the primary grades. The goal of the program is to raise the base of instruction for all students. Participation in the program helps schools achieve this goal in three ways:

- Developers provide a dynamic framework for literacy lessons that build connections between reading and writing.

- It develops local capacity by training a building-level literacy coordinator.
- Developers require that the safety net of Reading Recovery be available for children in the first grade who are at risk of reading failure.

The collaborative literacy program at Ohio State University began in 1986 when a group of Reading Recovery teachers from the Columbus Public Schools and staff from the university formed a study group to examine more effective ways to teach children. The first class of literacy coordinators was trained in 1993–1994. Schools that participate in the collaborative literacy program make a five-year commitment that includes supporting and training a Literacy Coordinator to work with the teachers in their schools, and releasing him or her half-time to coach teachers and collect data to monitor the progress of the students during the implementation of the program.

Teachers using the collaborative literacy program use an integrated approach to teaching language arts. They provide authentic opportunities for reading and writing based on a continuum of more to less teacher support. They employ four contexts for reading: reading aloud to children, shared reading, guided reading and reading workshop, and independent reading. In addition, they employ four contexts for writing: language experience and shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing and writing workshops, and independent writing. The teachers use flexible collaborative grouping, sometimes working with homogeneous groups of readers, and at other times with heterogeneous groups, depending on the instructional purpose. The approach emphasizes reflective practice in which teachers are encouraged to continually reflect upon the effectiveness of their teaching through discussions, videotape analysis, and systematic observation of their students' progress.

A modification of the Ohio State University Collaborative Literacy Program could include a focus on advanced readers and gifted students, and use successful strategies that have been used with gifted students with all of the students.

IDEAS INTO ACTION

Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R)

The Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R) framework incorporates the Type III component of the Renzulli (1978a) Triad model, in which students move from teacher-directed opportunities to self-choice activities. Reis (2004) identified a number of collaborative literacy activities that include opportunities to explore new technology, use higher level questioning and thinking skills in discussion groups, and engage in creativity training in language arts, learning centers, interest-based projects, free-reading, and book chats. The intent of these activities is for students to learn to read critically and to locate a variety of reading materials, especially high-quality, challenging literature. Options for independent study are available for students during the Type III component. Figure 1.7 illustrates the SEM-R framework.

Figure 1.7 Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R)

Phase 1: Exposure	Phase 2: Training and Self-Selected Reading	Phase 3: Interest and Choice Components
High-interest books to read aloud <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Picture books – Fiction/novels – Nonfiction – Poetry Higher order thinking probing questions Bookmarks for teachers with questions regarding Bloom's taxonomy, biography, character, illustrations, and other topics relevant to the study of literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and discussions • Sustained silent reading • One-on-one teacher conference on reading strategies and instruction • Bookmarks for students posing higher order questions regarding character, plot, setting, considering the story, and other useful topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing creative thinking • Exploring the internet • Genre studies • Library exploration • Responding to books • Investigation centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Creative thinking – Exploring the internet – Reading nonfiction – Focus on biographies • Buddy reading • Books on tape • Literature circles • Creative or expository writing • Type III investigations

SOURCE: Reis, S. M., et al. (2005). Talented readers. Unpublished paper, University of Connecticut, p. 5.

PARALLEL CURRICULUM

The parallel curriculum is a curriculum-planning model based on the composite work of Tomlinson et al. (2002) in an effort to provide guidance to teachers and administrators in planning for curriculum differentiation. The model holds considerable appeal for many educators because they can readily adapt it to any learner, subject domain, or grade level (VanTassel-Baska & Brown, 2005). The parallel curriculum model includes four components: the Core Curriculum, the Curriculum of Connection, the Curriculum of Practice, and the Curriculum of Identity.

The Parallel Curriculum Model

CORE	CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM	CURRICULUM
CURRICULUM	OF	OF	OF
	CONNECTIONS	PRACTICE	IDENTITY

The two components of the parallel curriculum model that have particular relevance to collaborative literacy are the Curriculum of Connections and the Curriculum of Identity. The Curriculum of Connections, which expands on the Core Curriculum, is designed to help students understand overarching or key concepts and principles of new content, and to use the thinking skill of analogies to solve problems. The Curriculum of Identity is designed to help students explore a discipline or a field as it relates to their individual interests, goals, and strengths, both now and in the future.

CURRICULUM OF CONNECTIONS

The Curriculum of Connections is designed to help students think about and Apply key concepts, principles, and skills:

- In a range of instances throughout a given discipline, and across disciplines
- Across time and locations
- Across cultures, and as affected by various conditions (economic, technological, political, etc.)
- Through varied perspectives and through the eyes of a variety of people affected by the ideas
- By an examination of the connection between concepts and development of the disciplines

The Curriculum of Connections involves students in making connections to self, other texts, and other people. As students make connections across time, events, topics, disciplines, cultures, and perspectives, they will build their understandings of interdisciplinary themes and intradisciplinary generalizations. Figure 1.8 summarizes the purpose of making connections in the curriculum of connections.

Figure 1.8 Purpose of Making Connections in the Curriculum of Connections

Students will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve their problem solving • Make the strange familiar • Develop their analogical reasoning and metaphoric thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve their depth of understanding • Enhance their perspective 	

CURRICULUM OF CONNECTIONS IN ACTION

The Curriculum of Connections in action and the use of metaphoric thinking can be illustrated in the government class of Mr. James. He and his students identify three organizing key concepts they want to explore—culture, continuity, and diversity—and each student selects a country to compare and contrast with the American culture, using these three concepts. The students study the geography of their selected country, investigate how geography affects the lives of people, and then compare and contrast their country's geography to that of the United States, particularly to the state in which they live. Each student compares and contrasts changes in selected aspects of culture in the United States and in their selected country, including technology, jobs, religion, music, and art over a 20-year period. These examinations of the different aspects of culture address key concepts of continuity and diversity.

Several students develop soundscapes of their countries and explain how changes throughout the two decades have affected the culture. Other students create and maintain diaries of exemplary leaders of the countries and focus on how diversity in the two countries affects culture.

Mr. James uses collaborative literacy strategies with the students by asking them to work together in small groups, to share the information that they locate, to visualize aspects from their reading, and to role play with the entire class. Two students draw a mural, including a timeline and illustrations, that traces changes throughout the two decades in their countries. This mural is then displayed in the town council room, since a town in one of the countries chosen is a sister city of their town.

CURRICULUM OF IDENTITY IN ACTION

The Curriculum of Identity is designed to help students explore a discipline or field as it relates to their individual interests, goals, and strengths, in the present and in the future. The Curriculum of Identity provides specific techniques for learning about individual students' Identities and identifies critical differences among students. It identifies where teachers need to make adjustments in curriculum and instruction to accommodate critical differences and helps to make learning more efficient and effective.

An example shared by Leppien (2003) illustrates the Curriculum of Identity in action with an 11th-grade English class. Students work to meet the prescribed writing standards and take part in writing workshops; each student selects a genre for future exploration. Two students, Amy and Darius, select genres in which they have a personal interest—Amy wants to be a writer of short stories and novels, and Darius wants to be a playwright. The two students study writers relevant to their preferred genres, examining how these people became writers, how their careers evolved over time, the positive aspects in their writing lives, and conversely what was costly to them, what advice they would give aspiring writers, and how their writing affected the authors' cultures, values, and worldviews.

The overarching question that Amy and Darius address is “What does it mean to be a writer?” Students develop a unique way to respond to this question as it relates to their chosen writer, and relate their investigations to themselves as present and future writers. Their reflections are crafted in the genre that they select and the writers they investigate. As the students study their writers, the teacher guides them to develop a fuller sense of what it means to be writers, to investigate how the pursuit of writing can be both a good thing and a bad thing, and to reflect on whether writing is a good match for their own interests, habits, perspectives, and temperaments. The teacher expects that the students will develop insights into ways in which the pursuit of writing can contribute to their individual lives, and ways in which they can contribute to the field of writing. Figure 1.9 illustrates benefits of students spending time involved in the curriculum of identity.

Figure 1.9 Benefits for Students Involved in the Curriculum of Identity

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- Students master required content
 - Students examine and reflect on their individual strengths
 - Students clarify, at increasing levels of specificity, the degree of “fit” between their learning profile and targeted field
 - Student growth is highlighted, and possible next steps are targeted
 - Student creative productivity across the life span is increased
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COLLABORATIVE LITERACY: A NOVEL STUDY THROUGH DRAMA

Rosenblatt (1994) said that the reader and the text have a spiral reciprocal relationship in which each conditions the other. She introduced the term “transactional” to conceptualize the reader as having a reservoir of linguistic and life experiences that reflect each reader’s cultural, social, and personal history, as well as his or her past experiences with language. Rosenblatt said that readers relate to the text, to one another, and to the use of different experiences produced during their transaction. She advocated the use of drama for teachers who want to encourage an aesthetic stance during the reading of a novel. We offer the following account as a case study.

Case Study

Miss Brown, a middle-school teacher of language arts, planned a three-week novel study to establish connections between her students’ textual experiences and the social and imaginative world of drama. She used the novel *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech (2000), the story of a 13-year-old girl named Sophie who sails across the Atlantic toward England, the land of her grandfather. The book focuses on Sophie and her cousin Cody, who are able to survive at sea. The book is an incredible story of courage, which is the theme that Miss Brown has been using with her students.

The teacher reads several paragraphs from the book to establish both knowledge and a feeling for the setting, and then asks the students to create an image of what the boat looks like and what it would feel like to be on watch for four hours like Sophie as the fog comes in “creeping along on little cat feet.” She then asks the students to share the visualizations that they had while she was reading. To encourage full class participation in the discussion, the teacher uses a talking stick, which she passes around for all of the students to use and pass around as they share their visualizations.

One student says, “I saw the gray mist, and I felt the moisture on my face. I saw and heard the huge waves crashing, and the wind roaring.”

Another student says, “I saw the fog moving in like a cat, slinking along, then it began to roll in much stronger, like a tiger, sort of loping along in front of the boat. The wind was howling like a live thing.”

The students take turns sharing their visualizations, responding with their bodies, in a rolling and shrinking, fearful way, as if they were actually experiencing Sophie's night watch on the tossing sea. Then the teacher asks the students to work in collaborative groups of five to represent the setting of *The Wanderer*. She asks them to create a representation that they all agree upon on large butcher paper. During the activity, they reflect an aesthetic stance while drawing and sketching their visualization of the boat, but also an efferent stance to the text.

The teacher then introduces the strategy of creating a soundscape to encourage the students to describe events and incidents from the novel with sounds and no words. To help the students become comfortable with the use of a soundscape, she asks the entire class to create a soundscape of their school to help ensure that they clearly understand what a soundscape represents. Each student proposes a sound that they believe "belongs" in the school. One student makes a beep, beep noise and then says: "Excuse the interruption, but there will be no recess today." Another makes a buzzing noise to simulate the vacuuming outside the hall, another rustles paper, one moves a chair, one screeches chalk on the board, and another drops a book. When all of the students have made a sound, and they all know what a soundscape is, the teacher asks them to create a soundscape of the boat. Working in groups of five, the students go to various parts of their classroom to discuss the sounds they will use to create a soundscape of *The Wanderer*.

When they are ready to share with one another, one student takes out a flute and begins to play, another student begins to make howling noises, another swishes her hands, and another makes creaking noises. The students share that they are depicting flutelike sounds of birds, the wind howling, the swishing noises of the waves, and the creaking of the boat. Another student makes a plopping noise, which she says is the sound the dolphins make when they surface; another makes a pounding noise, which she says is Sophie's heart because she is afraid. All of the sounds are unique, and the students thoroughly enjoy sharing their soundscape.

The teacher then introduces a strategy called the Interview (Macy, 2004). She randomly chooses a student to play Sophie, and the student quickly pulls out her shirt from her jeans, kicks off her shoes, and rumples her hair. She selects another to play Cody, who kicks off his shoes and rolls up his jeans. The teacher says that there is a welcoming committee when Sophie and Cody arrive home from their journey. In collaborative groups of five, she asks them to identify questions the committee might want to ask them. The students decide which students will role play these individuals represented in the welcoming committee: Sophie and Cody's parents, a local newspaper reporter, a newscast reporter, and several friends. The students ask the following questions of Sophie and Cody:

- Sophie, I saw a picture of you in the bosun's chair. Were you afraid up that high? What could you see?
- Is it hard for a group of people to get along on a boat for a long period of time? Did you fight?
- Did you miss your family?
- What was it like to be on "watch" for four hours?

- Cody, I brought some rope. Can you tie one of those knots for me?
- Did *The Wanderer* have problems? It was an old boat, wasn't it?
- How did you feel when you set sail from Nova Scotia and then finally reached land?
- How has the trip changed you?

The students are relaxed in their role playing; Sophie and Cody answer the questions, and the reporters for the paper and the newscast move off to one side of the classroom to write their stories. All of the class becomes involved in a collaborative writing activity in which they journal as Sophie and Cody did on the trip, selecting one aspect of the trip to share with one another. The teacher is amazed at how empathetic the students are toward Sophie and Cody in their struggle to reclaim who they are. Several students share in their journals that they too had to work hard in being who they want to be, with all the pressure and expectations from friends and family.

Macy (2004) describes a novel study through drama using Gary Paulsen's novel *Hatchet* (1987) in which elementary students create a soundscape of the wilderness where Brian survived following a plane crash in Canada. The 13-year-old boy survived with only his clothing and his hatchet. The teacher asks the students to role play reporters interviewing Brian upon his safe return. She makes the following statement about the important growth of one of the students:

I think of Dale, who is not a highly motivated student, and it takes a lot of different strategies to get her motivated and working. But I can think of a number of activities where she was loving what she was doing. She was writing; she was reading; she was sharing her material. I think of the news reporter where she came up with fantastic ideas, which she wanted to share with everyone (Macy, 2004, p. 245).

Rosenblatt (1978) said that if a reader takes a predominantly aesthetic stance to the reading, personal feelings, ideas, and attitudes can be stimulated. In this case study, the teacher, through collaborative literacy and the use of a variety of engaging strategies, is able to provide a highly personal transaction, and the reading is shaped by the students' lived-through experiences.

TEACHERS PUTTING IDEAS INTO ACTION

Bringing Heart and Soul into the Classroom

Annemarie Roeper (1995), in her book *Selected Writings and Speeches*, talks about the fact that some people with great intellectual ability do not want to learn for a variety of reasons, and she says we cannot force them to, as much as we might try. She reminds us that motivation is emotional, not cognitive, and that gifted children overflow with emotion, passion, and enthusiasm. She stresses that there is a dichotomy between the needs of the gifted and the goals of education. Find one other teacher to discuss how the "heart and soul" that

Roeper talks about can be brought back into the school. Capture your ideas in your journal and share them with two more teachers in small groups.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED STUDENTS: EMPATHY AND CREATIVITY

Annemarie Roeper (1995) shares the following anecdote:

A four-year-old gifted child was passionately interested in learning all about animals—she knew all their Latin names. She knew which ones were extinct and why. She knew the importance of the skeleton, etc., she had a beautiful command of language. Her emotions and love for animals could not tolerate the thought that they ate each other. She invented a whole world of animals who were so constructed that they did not need to eat each other. She was filled with sadness about the violence in nature. Her family acknowledged this reaction in her and did not reject it as childish. (p. 45)

In small groups, discuss what a school or teacher would need to understand about this gifted child's needs, and how collaborative literacy experiences could assist her. Examine the parallel curriculum or the SEM-R for ideas and suggestions that could be provided to meet this child's learning needs.

Koan Exploration

John Tarrant (2004) in his book *Bring Me the Rhinoceros*, suggests that a paradox can be used to unwind or disentangle consciousness and language. Zen koans are brief sayings, questions, stories, or a bit of conversation that can stimulate you to examine your thinking. Tarrant says that whenever the mind offers a thought, it is really offering a hypothesis about reality.

Koans originated in China about 1,300 years ago, at about the same period of time as the Arthurian legends in England. Koans will encourage you to notice that things are clear, or to discard the idea that things are not clear.

Use the following koans in small collaborative group discussion, and remember to handle all questions and comments with respect:

- You know what sound two hands make: What is the sound of one hand?
- In old China, someone gave the Governor a rare fan made of rhinoceros horn—an expensive, useless object. The Governor gave it to the local Zen master, and it was forgotten. One day, the Zen master remembered it and said, "Bring me the rhinoceros fan."

"Umm, it's broken," said the secretary.

"In that case, bring me the rhinoceros."

Discuss these koans, making sure that everyone in the group has an opportunity to respond and ask questions. Reflect in your journal and/or in the group on any creative breakthroughs that you or the group makes.

Annoying Child Activity

Derrick Jensen, in his book *Walking on Water: Reading, Writing and Revolution* (2004), says that the real point in education is to help students find themselves and their individual passion. He champions the idea of ferreting out and defining one's biases and assumptions. Jensen uses an activity called "The Annoying Child" that can be used in collaborative literacy discussions.

Identify an issue that you feel strongly about, and try to explain it to a group of three or four other teachers. These teachers will play the role of the Annoying Child, and relentlessly ask you questions to ferret out your biases and assumptions. After about 5–10 minutes, reflect in your journal on the experience, and/or discuss any new insights into your own thinking with the group. After hearing one teacher's reflections, another teacher in the group can identify another issue, and the group can again relentlessly ask questions.

Walk on Water

Write in your journal, and/or discuss in a collaborative discussion group of four or five teachers, your response to the phrase "walking on water." Spend about 20–25 minutes on this activity, and make sure everyone has a chance to respond. This activity will stimulate many responses, from literal walks on frozen pools to metaphorical personal "miracles" that the group may have experienced or explored.

Common Ground

In small groups, discuss the following quotation by Mary Parker Follett (1924), and try to make as many connections as you can. Focus on your identity, who you are, and who you want to become.

The most successful teacher of all is one who sees another picture not yet actualized. See the things which belong in the present picture, and those that are not yet there. Above all, make sure your co-workers see that it is not your purpose which is to be achieved, but a common purpose, born of the desires and activities of the group.

Why Not Use Gifted Literacy Strategies for All Students?

How a teacher can extend the koan exploration strategy: Teachers can extend the koan exploration thinking strategy by having students read a book written by Jon Muth called *Zen Shorts* (2005). This book invites the reader to examine the thinking around a problem-solving situation. The book can also be used to compare cultural aspects of how different groups go about thinking and problem solving.

How a teacher can adapt strategies by grade levels: Younger students can think of hand-clapping games to tell the story of the rhinoceros. Older students can engage

in a variety of research topics, such as animals or China. Students can also create synonyms and antonyms for the different vocabulary words used in the koan example.

How a teacher can use strategies across content areas: Math students can learn about how much it costs to repair a variety of objects, such as expensive and useless items discussed. If students are interested in drama or theater, they can research plays written by Chinese authors and compare and contrast the plays with the different koans.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we explored the concept of collaborative literacy, how it builds on the ideas of Rosenblatt (1978), and its relationship to the transactional theory of reading. We examined the implications of Vygotsky's theory for collaborative literacy, particularly his concept that thought and language in the mind of a child grows out of interactions with others, and when children are in social situations, they use language as a tool to explore the world. We introduced characteristics of advanced readers and gifted students, and shared the research base for collaborative literacy and the concept that it calls for the use of multiple strategies that engage the learner in highly motivating group activities.

We introduced a strategy to foster collaborative literacy, Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR), suggested by Klingner and Vaughn (1999), as well as the role of the teacher in collaborative literacy and the use of both direct and indirect strategies. We recommended collaborative literacy with parents, since parents can be a rich source of information concerning their children, to plan and implement reading activities for their children. The section on Ideas into Action provided teachers activities to explore the needs and characteristics of gifted children using the work of Annemarie Roeper, to stimulate examination of their own thinking through Zen koans and the work of John Tarrant, and to compare cultural aspects of different groups in John Muth's Zen Shorts. It also discussed the use of both direct program adaptations from the field of gifted education, including the Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading (SEM-R) program of Renzulli (1978a) and the Parallel Curriculum, a model for planning curriculum based on the work of Tomlinson et al. (2002). This model can be adapted for any learner, subject domain, or grade level. The Parallel Curriculum consists of four components, but the two that have the most to offer to collaborative literacy are the Curriculum of Connections and the Curriculum of Identity.

As an example of collaborative literacy in action, we provided a case study of a teacher using the novel *The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech (2000) with students of all abilities. We discussed collaborative literacy schools as an example of long-term professional development, using Ohio State University as a pioneer in building collaborative literacy programs in schools and universities. To provide greater depth, we included activities for teachers to extend the ideas of the chapter, and opportunities to explore literature to build understanding of the gifted child—particularly, the activity called “The Annoying Child.”