
LITERACY
SYMPOSIUM
AT THE FOREFRONT OF LITERACY LEARNING





INTRODUCTION

Greetings and Salutations!

I hope this newsletter finds you and yours well! Thank you for being a member of the **UCF Literacy Symposium** community.

The 2022 UCF Literacy Symposium theme is *Reigniting Literacy Collaborations*. Considering the challenges educators have been experiencing over the past two years, we chose this theme based on feedback from teachers and school leadership teams, which underscored a desire for reestablishing important collaborations. My colleague Dr. Marjorie Ceballos, Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership, and I chose to showcase the professional work of local talent (i.e., Florida teachers, instructional/literacy coaches, and school administrators). To date, we offered the following keynote presentations:

- The 2022 Florida Teacher of the Year, [Ms. Sarah Painter](#), reminded us of the value of joining with others, owning our practice, finding joy in collaboration, and believing in the power of “yet.”
- [Ms. Whitney Augustine](#), a FL DOE *Just Read, Florida!* Region 8 Literacy Director invited us to find our team, find our light (again), and share it with colleagues, students, and our communities.
- Four literacy leaders from the Florida K-12 School for the Deaf & the Blind ([Mr. Brent Bechtold](#), [Ms. Kathy Pyle](#), [Ms. Cally Traetto](#), and [Ms. Elisha Zuaro](#)) demonstrated how to make literacy collaborations with colleagues across content areas and grade levels fun, engaging, live, and accessible anytime!

We will continue to offer virtual webinars and workshops, so stay tuned for updates. We will send notifications of upcoming professional development to all event subscribers via email and will also post them on our [homepage](#).

This year I decided to change the newsletter format to make content more accessible and digestible. So, here it goes! You and 2,500 educators and other professionals will receive a monthly email newsletter titled, ***At the Forefront of Literacy Learning***. I will select research and related trends and issues, provide a quick, targeted analysis, make research to practice connections, and share relevant resources. I hope this newsletter supports your literacy and learning needs. I would love to hear what you think about this content or ideas you have for future topics and resources—share your feedback here: LitSymposium@ucf.edu.

Until next time, wishing you a healthy and restful summer!

Vicky Zygouris-Coe, Ph.D.
Professor, Reading Education
Founder & Organizer, UCF Literacy Symposium



RESEARCH BITES: LONG STORY SHORT

This question guided my search: *How can research on the importance of collaboration for literacy teaching and learning inform educators in today's shifting contexts?*

I reviewed several studies related to the importance of collaborations on literacy teaching and learning and chose to share a current report/study titled, [Collaboration: Partnering with Colleagues, Families, and Caregivers to Promote Student Success](#). This recent report was published by the National Center for Learning Disabilities [NCLD] (August 3, 2021).

I chose this report because this research showed that collaboration among all stakeholders is vital for the post-Covid-19 teaching and learning contexts. Also, this report provides **relevant and actionable suggestions and practices** for (a) strengthening educator collaborations across grade levels, content areas, and positions; (b) partnering with families and caregivers; (c) structuring effective peer collaborations in the classroom—check out the figure on *Skills and Go-to Moves!*; (d) developing collaboration skills, (e) using collaboration to promote effective progress monitoring of student learning and outcomes; and (f) using additional resources to support professional learning.

Results from a study that surveyed over 2,400 U.S. teachers and was conducted by [NCLD](#) and [Boston University's Community-Engaged Research and Evaluation Sciences \(CERES\) Institute for Children & Youth](#) highlighted the importance of:

- **teacher collaboration as a key support** for problem-solving, analyzing data, and making instructional decisions about the appropriate interventions for students; and
- **structured blocks of time** for effective teacher collaborations.



RESEARCH TO PRACTICE TAKEAWAYS

The following takeaways can help you *reignite* your literacy collaborations with various stakeholders.

1. Literacy teaching and learning is complex and multi-layered. Today's unique educational contexts add additional layers of complexity to literacy collaborations. *No educator has to do it alone!*
2. Effective collaborations require good communication skills.
3. Collaboration with families and caregivers is essential for students' literacy and learning.
4. Collaboration is a tool for creating effective student learning experiences.

5. Collaborative problem-solving followed by progress monitoring can positively impact teachers and students. Students and teachers benefit when collaboration involves all stakeholders: teachers, specialists, school administrators, paraprofessionals, and families.
6. Teacher collaborations nowadays can happen in several ways (e.g., face-to-face/online professional learning networks, structured time for co-planning, quick and focused collaborative conversations, discussion boards for monitoring student progress, digital repositories of instructional resources and assessments, etc.).
7. School administrators need to create collaborative support structures for teacher and student learning. Productive collaborations require time, space, and support (e.g., protecting teacher planning and collaborative time, paying for substitutes, etc.).
8. Collaboration leverages individual knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to support students' literacy and learning across content areas and grade levels. In turn, it creates collective educator efficacy and literacy capital.
9. Deliberate collaboration provides opportunities for teams, such as teachers, language and literacy specialists, paraprofessionals, volunteers, and service providers, to problem solve, share, and identify workable strategies and approaches to meet specific student needs.
10. Educational entities across the world are adjusting to the unique pandemic/post-pandemic changes and demands on teachers, students, and families. Sustained flexibility with supporting collaboration can facilitate teaching and learning transformations.



1 QUESTION FOR YOU

Here's some food for thought ...

- What is one small, attainable action you can take to *reignite* your literacy collaborations?



RESOURCES

These resources can inspire and facilitate your collaborative goals.

- [A Collaborative Model for PD](#)
- [3 Tips for Co-Teaching Multilingual Students](#)
- [Top 5 Insights for Improving Family-School Collaboration During Covid and Beyond](#)

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