Differentiating Small Group Instruction
The Center for the Collaborative Classroom is a nonprofit organization dedicated to students’ growth as critical thinkers who learn from, care for, and respect one another.
How we teach matters as much as what we teach.

Fostering caring relationships and building inclusive and safe environments are foundational practices for both the student and adult learning communities.

Classroom learning experiences should be built around students constructing knowledge and engaging in action.

Honoring and building on students’ intrinsic motivation lead to engagement and achievement.

The social and academic curricula are interdependent and integrated.
Small group instruction is effective because teaching is focused precisely on what the students need to learn next to move forward. Ongoing observation of your students, combined with systematic assessment enables you to draw together groups of students who fit a particular instructional profile.

— Fountas & Pinnell
What questions do you have about small group instruction?
Our Questions

When you observe small group instruction in your districts what do you see in that practice?

Are all students getting the same quality of instruction?
Our Questions

Is the investment of teacher time planning small group instruction benefitting students to the same degree?

How do we differentiate our delivery of small group instruction to meet the needs of students?
What does research tell us about differentiated, small group instruction?
The small-group, differentiated reading model enables teachers to focus on specific skills needed by varied groups of children (Tyner, 2003).

Struggling readers are often asked to read text that is far more difficult for them to read than the texts their better reading peers are assigned (Allington, 2012). Since Betts (1946) first established the criteria for optimum text difficulty, there have been a number of studies validating the potential power of engaging children in reading where their accuracy is high. (Allington, 2013)
“...Guided Reading may not be the appropriate lesson structure to implement with all small groups of students, especially struggling readers, since it typically emphasizes discussing the meaning of text rather than building specific word analysis skills. Due to this emphasis, Guided Reading may not be the best lesson structure for providing focused and systematic instruction in specific skills and knowledge the student is struggling with (i.e., letter-sound fluency, blending, suffixes, multi-syllable strategies, etc.).”

Florida Center for Reading Research
Let’s take a look at a small group in action...
Discuss the video.

What did you notice about the students?

What did you notice about the teacher?
Debrief

Reflect on your initial questions-what new questions do you have?

What do you want to continue to consider as you support teachers in their delivery of small group instruction?

What might your next steps be?
If we want to foster reading development, then we must design lessons that provide the opportunities for struggling readers to actually read.

Allington, 2013
Welcome to Our Community!

We are here to support you!

collaborativeclassroom.org/pd

Take advantage of our free online resources to support our programs in your school or after-school site.

Visit

Check our website at collaborativeclassroom.org/forum for upcoming events, Common Core tips, and inspiring blogs.

Share

Share your success stories! E-mail us at success@collaborativeclassroom.org.

Ask

Do you have a question? Ask us via our online community at collaborativeclassroom.org/forum.

Try

Try out for all our programs by starting a trial account at ccclearninghub.org.

Find us on: 🌐🌐🌐