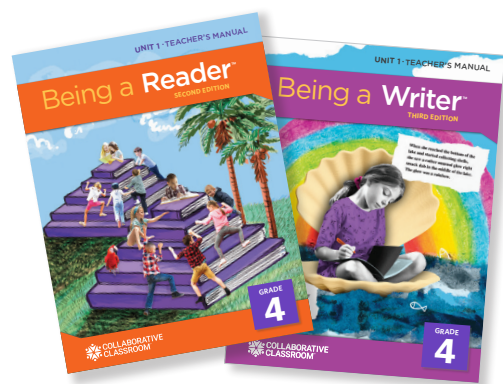


Publisher's Response

The Reading League Compass is the only comprehensive resource for evaluating curricular alignment with the science of reading, making it invaluable for curriculum decision-makers.

Collaborative Classroom deeply appreciates The Reading League's thorough and constructive evaluation of Collaborative Literacy (2021), our comprehensive ELA core curriculum for grades K–5 that is comprised of the *Being a Reader* and *Being a Writer* programs.

The only third-party evaluation of Collaborative Literacy (2021) to date, this report underscores the program's strengths while providing valuable insights for refinement.



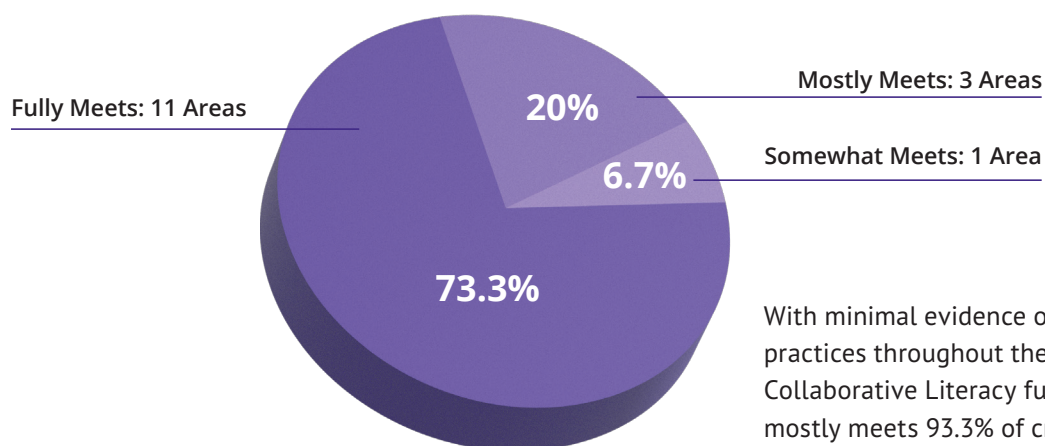
STRENGTHS

► Minimal Evidence of Red Flag Practices

In their final report summary, The Reading League reviewers stated: **“Overall the reviewed components for Collaborative Literacy’s curriculum were found to ‘meet’ or ‘mostly meet’ most criteria for Grades K–5. This means there was minimal evidence of red flag practices.”**

These findings indicate both Collaborative Literacy’s pedagogy and materials are well aligned with the scientific evidence base of how children learn to read.

Collaborative Literacy Fully Meets or Mostly Meets 93.3% of Criteria



STRENGTHS (continued)

▶ Alignment with Evidence-Based Practices

Reviewers indicated that **Collaborative Literacy effectively incorporates critical components of Scarborough’s Reading Rope**, including “background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge.” This alignment with evidence-based practices reinforces Collaborative Literacy’s capacity to build skilled readers.

▶ Purposeful Integration of Reading and Writing

The seamless and intentional connection between reading and writing activities across all grade levels of Collaborative Literacy was considered a significant strength.

Reviewers noted that throughout *Being a Reader* and *Being a Writer*—which together comprise Collaborative Literacy—**“reading and writing are integrated purposefully as a means to strengthen student comprehension and composition skills”** and that specific “reading-writing connection activities are integrated into each unit.”

▶ Support for Multilingual Learners

“Collaborative Literacy’s support for multilingual learners is comprehensive,” reviewers determined.

The program’s “practical tools and strategies” for tailoring instruction to support multilingual learners were praised, including explicit instructional guidance and differentiated support. These features ensure equitable access to learning for all students, regardless of language background.

Reviewers also noted that Collaborative Literacy provides “useful information to build teacher knowledge” about [supporting multilingual learners](#).

▶ Rich, Wide-Ranging, and High-Quality Texts

Reviewers noted Collaborative Literacy’s exceptional trade book collection, calling attention to its **“array of rich academic texts that encourage exploration”** and expose students to varied topics and ideas, rich vocabulary, and multiple genres.

These carefully selected texts serve as “exemplary models of effective writing” and provide an engaging foundation for developing critical reading skills.

▶ Professional Development Resources

Reviewers commended Collaborative Literacy’s professional development videos as “particularly impactful for educators” in that they “provide clear examples of the program’s strategies, allowing educators to experience program implementation directly.”

As part of Collaborative Classroom’s comprehensive [system of professional learning support for educators and leaders](#), these resources are intended to strengthen implementation fidelity and empower educators to deliver instruction effectively.

ADDRESSING FEEDBACK

In this section, we address feedback and provide additional context for the three areas in which Collaborative Literacy “mostly meets” criteria and the one area that “somewhat meets” criteria.

Breakdown of How Collaborative Literacy Meets Criteria	
Fully Meets Criteria for	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Phonological and phonemic awareness• Fluency practices• Language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing• Background knowledge• Vocabulary• Language structures• Verbal reasoning• Literacy knowledge• Handwriting• Spelling• Composition
Mostly Meets Criteria for	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Word recognition• Phonics and phonic decoding• Reading comprehension
Somewhat Meets Criteria for	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment

► Enhancing High-Frequency Word Instruction

Starting in 2025, instructional materials were revised to ensure the sound-out protocols were integrated throughout all materials, both digital and print.

► Adjustments to Mnemonics for Phonics Instruction

The keyword for /th/ was adjusted to “that thumb” to address the voiced and unvoiced sounds of the digraph. We reviewed the keyword “balloon” and chose to keep it because of the importance of maintaining alignment between our Tier 1 and Tier 2 mnemonics. We are supporting teachers with modeling the /b/ sound clearly during instruction (as is needed with all stop consonants, regardless of the keywords used).

► Independent Reading Practice for Younger Learners

The feedback regarding independent reading for early grades has been noted, and we affirm that students must have opportunities to practice reading decodable texts while also engaging with texts that nurture their curiosity and build their interests. We will continue implementation guidance to emphasize the teacher’s vital role during independent reading sessions and ensure that students, especially younger readers, are provided with appropriate support. In addition, starting in 2025 students can engage in daily independent practice of foundational skills and reading (including decodable texts and informational articles) using our curriculum aligned literacy app, CC PAL.

ADDRESSING FEEDBACK_(continued)

► Clarification of Assessment Language

The coding example that could be misconstrued as MVS (meaning, structure and visual cues) was immediately updated to align with research-based practices and uploaded.

► Clarification of Assessment Practices

Since the initial review, we have strengthened our assessments and scoring guidance considerably. Our assessments now feature structured rubrics with clearly defined performance levels, explicit scoring criteria, and teacher guidance that includes administration procedures and suggested instructional next steps. Assessments are also organized around consistent comprehension skill targets across units, supporting more reliable progress monitoring over time. We have also added fluency assessment support embedded within Individualized Daily Reading (IDR), giving teachers a practical, curriculum-integrated opportunity to observe and document students' reading fluency in an authentic context.

Our position remains that nonsense word measures are most effective as a screener or diagnostic tool administered at the system level, rather than as a component of curriculum-embedded assessments. Our assessments are designed to provide meaningful, instructionally aligned information and we continue to recommend that Collaborative Literacy be implemented within a broader assessment system that includes a validated screener incorporating nonsense word measures.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REPORT

► What Reviewers Noted about Collaborative Literacy

Reviewers called out specific features and examples from both *Being a Reader* and *Being a Writer*, which together comprise Collaborative Literacy.



On Lesson Structure

“This predictable structure is designed to **reduce students’ cognitive load, allowing them to focus more effectively on new content.**”

“Elements of language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing are taught in an explicit and systematic manner. For example, in *Being a Writer*, Grade 2, Unit 2, Week 1, Day 1, **teachers are provided with clear directives for the week’s instructional focus, including preteaching support and clear, step-by-step guidance in the daily lesson plans.** ... This explicit format, which is seen throughout Collaborative Literacy’s programs, focuses on teacher-driven instruction where students are guided through the learning process.”



On Phonics and Phonic Decoding

“**The program demonstrates strength in its phonic decoding practices through its focus on sound-symbol correspondences.** Phonics instruction is explicit and systematic to ensure students ‘... build their knowledge of spelling-sound relationships by applying them to reading words in isolation (word lists) and in decodable books’ (*Being a Reader Small Group Teacher’s Manual*, Set 1, p. x).”



On Fluency

“Collaborative Literacy’s fluency practices are ‘met.’ Starting in Kindergarten, students participate in choral reading to practice fluency. The program uses choral reading as ‘a technique used in the shared reading lessons to support students as they learn to read’ (*Being a Reader*, Grade 1, Unit 1, p. 67). **This provides both a direct model and support for learners not yet reading on their own, while offering beginning readers the opportunity to practice with familiar text.** In both instances, this serves to increase student confidence, as well.”



On Trade Books in Collaborative Literacy

“Collaborative Literacy’s trade book list provides teachers with access to high-quality read aloud texts that expose students to a variety of genres as well as rich vocabulary and syntax. **These texts are utilized across grades K–5, offering learners of all ages access to complex narrative and knowledge-building expository text sets.** As students progress into grades 3–5 and are more automatic with the code, they participate in Book Clubs which again contain diverse texts designed to build learner knowledge. Furthermore, Collaborative Literacy provides educators with guidance on selecting appropriate books for students in Book Clubs.”

“**The selected texts provide students with exposure to a range of genres, including historical fiction, realistic fiction, mystery, expository nonfiction, and narrative nonfiction.** This progression is systematic, with third graders focusing more on fiction (including realistic fiction, historical fiction, and mystery), while fifth graders engage with an increased emphasis on nonfiction. Additionally, instruction includes explanation and discussion about genre-specific text structures as well as their corresponding signal words. Students are also tasked to respond to and ask questions about the structure of a given text.”



On Questioning During Read Alouds

“Questioning during read alouds features a variety of questioning types ... **These thoughtful questions encourage students to engage with the text in different ways** by fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and a love of language.”



On Vocabulary

“**Vocabulary activities are designed to foster a deep understanding of vocabulary words where memorization is never emphasized.** Instruction is aligned to the four-part instructional framework for vocabulary including the direct and explicit instruction of targeted vocabulary words, incidental instruction of vocabulary through point of context teaching within a text, instruction of independent word learning strategies, including dictionary use, context clues, and cognates for Spanish-speaking students as well as opportunities for students to develop an awareness and interest in words through varied language experiences.”

“Explicit instruction in morphology starts in Kindergarten, beginning with inflectional suffixes and progressing to the study of etymology and morphology by Grade 5. **This progression builds from simple to complex ensuring that students develop a deep understanding of how words are formed and how their meanings are connected.**”



On Writing Composition

“**Writing is highly structured and teaches students to write about reading, offers explicit instruction in genre-specific writing skills as well as provides opportunities for learners to engage in a supportive writing community** ... Students across all grades K–5 are offered access to authentic mentor texts and integrated grammar and conventions lessons designed to support learners with revising and proofreading. Instruction of conventions, grammar, and sentence structure is explicit and follows a scope and sequence that is developmentally appropriate, systematically building on prior knowledge and skills.”



On Supporting and Assessing Multilingual Learners

“Collaborative Literacy’s curriculum includes Teacher Notes and guidance for multilingual learners. **These resources include instructive information for teachers including recommendations for assessing multilingual learners** by allowing students to be assessed individually or in small groups, reading aloud or paraphrasing instructions, modeling and/or repeating directions, allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge using different modalities and formats, use of visual supports, access to classroom resources, and extended time for student observation (*Being a Reader Implementation Handbook*, Grade 1, p. 70). Additionally, **Collaborative Literacy’s materials provide teachers with useful guidance for making differentiated Tier 1 instructional decisions** through their Helpful Lesson Features and Support for English Learners.”

OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

As a mission-driven organization, Collaborative Classroom values the insights provided by The Reading League’s reviewers and is committed to addressing areas for improvement. Our goal is to deliver resources that exceed expectations by continually evolving to align with the latest research in literacy education.

By enhancing the clarity, consistency, and effectiveness of both our [programs](#) and our [professional learning](#), we strive to support educators and empower students on their journey to literacy success.

We thank The Reading League for this opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue and advance our shared mission of bringing evidence-aligned literacy instruction to all.

ABOUT COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM

Collaborative Classroom is a mission-driven, nonprofit organization committed to ensuring that all students become proficient readers, writers, and thinkers who learn from, care for, and respect one another. Since the organization’s founding, our work has reached more than 10 million students and 440,000 educators across the country.

Visit collaborativeclassroom.org to learn about our mission, impact, and evidence-based resources for early childhood through grade 12.