

Odell Education Developing Core Literacy Proficiencies
Background Information

Introduction

The Developing Core Literacy Proficiencies (DCLP) Program is a student-centered, teacher-empowering grades 6-12 ELA curriculum that fosters student creativity and critical thinking essential for success in college, careers, and civic life.

The DCLP Program builds content and conceptual Knowledge, and develops 20 Literacy Skills and 12 Academic Habits essential for success in college and career. These skills, habits and knowledge form the central instructional and assessment objectives for a year-long progression of learning, and are developed across grades 6-12.

The commercial DCLP Program, as published by Jossey-Bass, a Wiley brand, and reviewed by EdReports, has its roots in Open Educational Resource (OER) curriculum commissioned by the New York State Regents in 2012 to provide early models and resources for school districts and teachers implementing the Common Core Standards. Distributed for free through the EngageNY website, the 33 units originally developed have now been downloaded over 1 million times by schools and teachers across the United States.

Knowledge, Literacy Skills and Academic Habits

The organizing concept behind the initial OER units, and the one that still drives the improved and expanded published curriculum, is that students must develop a set of core literacy proficiencies as a foundation for college and career readiness. Those four proficiencies are: *Reading Closely for Textual Details*, *Developing Evidence-Based Claims*, *Researching to Deepen Understanding*, and *Building Evidence-Based Arguments*. These proficiencies build upon each other within each grade, and spiral across the seven grades of the program (6-12). Because the development of strong literacy skills is grounded in the understanding of the interplay between and intertextuality of ideas and themes, the program develops these core literacy proficiencies through instruction that integrates the building of important knowledge from coherent sequences of rich texts with work on literacy skills and academic habits. This framework establishes aligned learning targets and assessment criteria within the curriculum and its many resources. This Skills framework, and its related resources and rubrics, is one of the many significant additions to the published version of the DCLP program.

The DCLP Program's Literacy Toolbox provides resources to develop its targeted proficiencies and skills, and includes graphic organizers, informational handouts, rubrics and checklists to support student learning and to evaluate progress. Each tool has been carefully designed for flexible use across the four core units and in extended instructional contexts with a variety of learners. The Literacy Toolbox is provided in Teacher and Student Editions.

Flexibility for Local Content Decisions

While including a number of important literary works, the DCLP curriculum primarily focuses on building knowledge from informational texts and literary non-fiction in the form of seminal speeches and documents, historical and personal narratives, scientific texts, informational resources in a variety of mediums, and essays, arguments, and op-ed pieces. As originally conceived, the rationale for this emphasis on informational texts was that teachers and students needed the greatest help in learning to teach and read them. However, the curriculum is also set up to empower teachers and encourage the extension of

the program to include locally-selected novels, plays, poems, films, other and literary works to create a personalized, comprehensive year-long learning progression. Extension activities with locally chosen texts can occur in a variety of ways: from accountable independent reading, to shorter lessons with additional topically-related texts, to text-based units built around locally chosen novels. The DCLP Program supports teachers in the design and delivery of their personalized year of instruction with a Personalization Guide containing a suite of planning resources and models.

Student-Centered to Develop Independent Critical Thinkers

The cohesive curriculum of the DCLP Program provides coherence for student learning, teacher planning, and school and district curriculum across grades 6-12. Students continue their development of the core proficiencies working each year with increasing sophistication and independence, and with more complex topics and texts.

That spiraling curriculum is intended to be student-centered throughout, encouraging the development of critical and creative thinking while emphasizing the importance of evidence-based reading, discussion, and writing. The program and its instructional resources have thus been developed to build students' literacy and knowledge over time, to engender their confidence in approaching and engaging with any text, to foster their independence as readers, and to instill enthusiasm for finding meaning in what they read.

This central goal, of empowering student readers and fostering their sense of efficacy, drives OE's approach to student-centered instruction. Rather than considering literacy to be a static state of learning what others believe one needs to know, OE sees literacy as a dynamic, evolving quest to make and communicate one's sense of the world with ever-increasing proficiency and sophistication. Because we believe that students need to "own" their literacy development, OE has developed curriculum that challenges students to find their own meaning in compelling texts, by utilizing strategic reading and thinking processes that encourage rigorous textual analysis and, at the same time, divergent (but evidence-based) interpretations.