



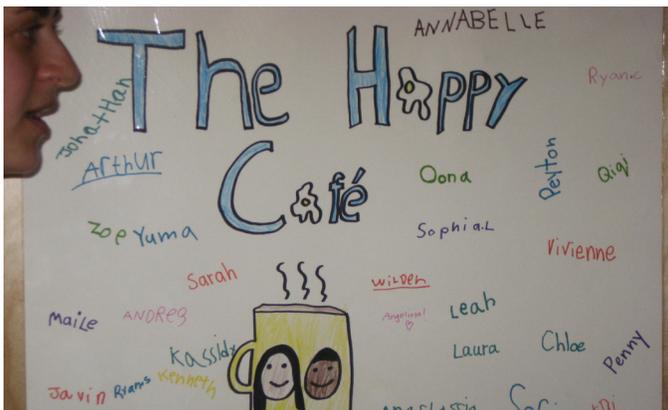
Collaboration and Collegiality

The Restaurant came alive, in no small part, because of the regular and productive collaboration of Sarah and Kristin, the two first grade teachers, and their student teachers. Sarah and Kristin each exhibited a collegial spirit, which their openness to both sharing their practice and learning from the other's demonstrated. Their effective collegial relationship was supported by the principal, who ensured teaching teams had regular time in the day to meet, and

of these strengths and supported one another by sharing anecdotes about their practice and organizing the study so they could participate in one another's classrooms.

Careful Planning and Learning from Experience

Kristin and Sarah (and their student teachers) carefully planned each aspect of The Restaurant, from the field trips to the restaurant design process to the interdisciplinary connections between math, science, language arts and social studies. For example, in one teacher team meeting, Sarah shared how she had elicited from her class what they already knew about restaurants. She said, "I think I was able to guide the discussion to get what I knew they knew out of them. We had a 'What is a restaurant?' conversation. We started to touch on the provocative question, "Is Starbucks a restaurant?" The kids became animated, no matter what opinion they held." This illustrates how the teaching team used their meetings to carefully attend to small instructional moments,



The workers at The Happy Café all signed their names to mark their participation.

who resourced the team with a coach, Bank Street's Peggy McNamara. The principal's investment paid off for the first graders, who benefitted from the collective thinking and experience of the teachers, two student teachers, and a teacher coach.

Each of the teachers also brought experiences that enriched the iterative development process of an emergent curriculum. Sarah, a Bank Street graduate, had learned to teach in the progressive tradition and thought deeply about how to follow the children's lead and incorporate their experiences, perspectives and development into the curriculum. Kristin brought several years experience as a public school teacher and had a strong sense of how to translate the larger concepts from The Restaurant into different curriculum areas and the routines and constraints of classroom life. The two teachers built off



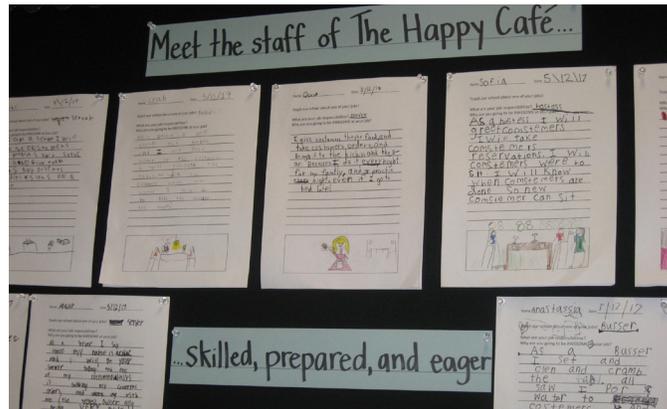
The two teachers built off of these strengths and supported one another by sharing anecdotes about their practice and organizing the study so they could participate in one another's classrooms.



The workers at The Happy Café drew and mounted their menu on the wall for all patrons to see.



from which the group could make decisions about what should happen next. As a result of Sarah sharing this story, the group was able to consider what children already knew about restaurants, and what else they might want or need to learn. It also modeled for the others in the group Sarah's approach to building on children's knowledge and engaging them in The Restaurant. Particularly for the student teachers, stories such as these revealed that class discussions were not merely a free flow of ideas, but purposefully constructed dialogues with intended learning outcomes.



The students who participated in the restaurant unit prepared for their big day by writing about their duties and how they will be great servers, bussers, cashiers, and more.

Later in the meeting, Kristin helped the group focus on another aspect of the study: the sequencing of the children's data collection during restaurant field trips. She wondered, "When we get to the restaurants, should we have the children draw a sketch before the interviews [of the restaurant staff] or after? They are so excited

when they get there." While seemingly an inconsequential point, this question actually represented both Kristin's depth of knowledge about how children behave on field trips, and her thoughtful consideration of how the field trips might be best organized for children's learning. Her question prompted the group to consider an entire set of questions about what appeared to be logistics on the surface, but had broader pedagogical implications, such as whether or not to bring clipboards, whether or not the interviews could be recorded, and whether or not the children should be assessed on their new knowledge of the restaurant.

Working Across Traditional Boundaries

Beyond sharing ideas and planning together, Sarah and Kristin reflected on their practice with one another and worked in ways that transcended the traditional divisions that can arise between teachers. While they each brought their own style to leading The Restaurant study in their individual classrooms, first graders at Midtown West engaged in similar learning experiences across the grade, regardless of whether Kristin or Sarah was teaching them. This built community between the classes, and had the effect of creating a common set of dilemmas for Kristin and Sarah to work on together as they planned and implemented The Restaurant. Among these were strategies for family and community participation, approaches to teaching science through food, and ensuring engagement from all students during the study, especially the two days during which each class opened their restaurant. One example of this collective problem solving included a time when the teachers thought about how to make sense of a writing assignment for which a student had created a fictional response to the prompt, "Write and draw a picture about where you get your food." While the teachers knew the student's account was untrue, they were not concerned, and were only aware of it because the child's



The kitchen staff prepare food in the kitchen.

parent had brought it to their attention. However, it did raise a teaching dilemma, because the teachers wondered how to build from fictional experiences, rather than real ones, as they taught science and social studies through food. In the end, they saw the story the child had produced simply another way of approaching the assignment, and found ways to incorporate her knowledge and imagination as they planned their next steps. The dialogue that their collaborative meeting facilitated about this issue, though, was profound because it concerned how they might incorporate their own knowledge of child development as they navigated the tension between imaginative play and classroom experiences grounded in real life phenomena. Complex issues such as these repeatedly surfaced in the collaborative meetings, indicating that the space was a place to sort through some of the common, but often tacit, elements of teaching.

Perhaps the most telling example of the collegial spirit with which Kristin and Sarah worked was their support for one another during the days each class opened their restaurant. With the support of their principal and colleagues, each of the teachers was able to participate in the other's classroom during those days. Because of their familiarity with the study and the students, the teachers became real partners to each other during those days, helping one another to guide students, interacting with parents and other guests, and generally helping to ensure that all the students were not only participating, but learning from the experience. In both classrooms, the restaurants went off without a hitch.

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