



## CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

# Pedagogy in Practice, Supporting the Whole Student & Making it Fun at the Same Time

## How DreamBox Can Help

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DreamBox is one of those solutions where the payback is so valuable for a teacher.

The kids love it and they're excited to log on.”

— LEE ANN HENNINGER  
Teacher, Castle View  
Elementary School

## Meeting Ms. Henninger

Working toward encouraging students to be Global Citizens, Castle View Elementary School teachers promote six basic principles – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Lee Ann Henninger, a teacher at Castle View for the past 19 years, finds that creating a fun and engaging environment for her first-grade students and utilizing DreamBox to enhance their learning are pivotal parts in this pedagogy.

As a longtime teacher with experience teaching almost every elementary grade level, Ms. Henninger has a passion for education and a dedication to her students. She aims to cultivate a fun learning environment within her classroom to keep her 19 first-grade students engaged throughout the day. Chants, songs, cute sayings, and idioms help the students remember what they learn. Rarely will you find Ms. Henninger sitting. Focusing on even the smallest details to motivate her students, she keeps moving and avoids speaking in a monotone voice to captivate her students' attention.

While she admits that technology isn't her strong suit, she has found DreamBox to be easy and highly valuable. She strives to utilize fun and engaging material that can help her students succeed and has found just that in DreamBox. By incorporating DreamBox into her classroom, it has become a fundamental tool and a core supplement to her lessons.

**Ms. Henninger communicates regularly with the students and parents about her expectations, always mindful that it's a collaborative process that needs buy-in from everyone and approaches it with a "team" mentality.** These clearly defined expectations ensure everyone knows what's going on, and she sees "rewards happen consistently" from this extra effort. Communicating with the parents is a vital part of how Ms. Henninger runs her classroom. From classroom updates to student encouragement, she reaches out to parents, so that they feel included. By sending home informational literature explaining how to access DreamBox for their children at home and encouraging them to review the Family Insight Dashboard to track



their child's progress, Ms. Henninger is making parents active participants in their child's education. Parents can help their child to navigate the program without having to worry that they're teaching them incorrectly.

Even as she checks the students' progress, Ms. Henninger's sure to include the parents by sending encouragement through apps such as Remind. She will regularly message parents with things like, "Whoo-hoo, I'm tallying up this week's DreamBox lessons. 16 out of 19 students completed valuable lessons. Rewards await! 5+ lessons is our goal." That type of inclusion really makes a difference for both the parent and the student. Parent involvement has been correlated with higher student usage, and Ms. Henninger's class is a model example of that. **Ms. Henninger knows that "kids need positive reinforcement," and she ensures that her students are encouraged by providing that reinforcement.** Calling them her 'DreamBox Stars,' Ms. Henninger hands out candy to reward her students who complete the DreamBox usage recommendation of five lessons each week. The boy and girl who complete the most lessons earn a trip to the 'treasure box' where they can select one prize. However, Ms. Henninger doesn't stop there; she'll write on the students' weekly DreamBox reports encouraging phrases like "You Rock!" and will include inspirational stickers.

Ms. Henninger regularly logs into the Educator Dashboard to review the Student Overview Report to see how often the kids log into DreamBox and checks how many lessons they complete each week. She noticed the positive impact it has on some students' ability to grasp the classroom lessons. For example, one girl in particular who has struggled with math, started using Dreambox at home and began meeting and sometimes exceeding the recommended 5-lesson weekly goal. Ms. Henninger found that soon, the girl was raising her hand more and becoming a more confident participant throughout the lessons, and says, "I want to think that her sudden DreamBox usage is helping." **DreamBox's engaging learning environment creates an experience that captures student's imagination and attention, and the adaptive learning platform provides the right lesson at the right time, which creates confidence and a sense of mastery.**

No matter if a child is at the top of the class or struggling to keep up with the lessons, Ms. Henninger wants to let students know that it's OK to "...make mistakes, take chances, get messy." That type of ideology is essential to creating a positive environment where kids can feel confident enough to raise their hands and get involved in the classroom. This helps to mitigate the failure factor that some students feel when they don't get an answer right. Creating the right environment for her students is hugely important to Ms. Henninger, but she recognizes that this can look different for each student.

Children learn in different ways, and giving them opportunities to try new learning techniques can help them connect to the learning style that works for them. While Ms. Henninger utilizes DreamBox, it's not the only way her students practice their math skills. She's taken the time to create a math kit for each student in her classroom because "...they can't learn from theories. They have to learn through hands-on activity." Each kit has a Rekenrek, counters, connecting cubes, 10 frames, and even more tactile implements that engage the kids. Ms. Henninger finds that the transition from DreamBox's virtual manipulatives to those physical manipulatives provides a comprehensive way for students to explore the conceptual understanding behind different math concepts through a variety of ways in order to reinforce learnings.

**There is always motion and activity in Ms. Henninger's classroom. Students work as a group, as partners, and on their own. They stand up, sit down, clap, and get excited.**

Creating variety in the classroom ensures that each student is finding a pathway to learning that works for him or her, and Ms. Henninger encourages active participation. This type of engagement fuels Ms. Henninger and gets her excited, saying, "...they don't think anything is too silly, and the wackier I am, the better I am."

Based on how much it's helped her in the classroom, Ms. Henninger is a big advocate for DreamBox within her own school and finds that when other teachers see her utilize the program both in the classroom and in the home, they become interested. **She's always sharing the benefits of using an adaptive learning platform, how DreamBox has helped her students master key math concepts, and has encouraged DreamBox usage in their classrooms.** While her primary focus is on her students, Ms. Henninger also feels passionate about helping newer teachers. With a long career as a teacher under her belt, she knows that she's not too far off from retirement, and says, "That's probably where my direction is going now, continuing to enjoy, but helping others and spreading information because if it stops with me, when I retire, the legacy stops. In teaching, we want that legacy to continue with great best practices that are shared and continued. So, if someone were to take something I did and tweak it to improve it for their own use, then I would say, 'I had a good day.'"

## Riverside Unified School District

District serves	49 schools
Castle View Elementary Enrollment	620
Grades	K-6
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch (FRL)	48%
English Learners	20%

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Children learn through different pathways: by working alone, talking through concepts, through play, and others like to build things. **As educators, we need to allow those students to tap into their pathway and I think we can leverage adaptive learning technology as a pathway for students.** So, DreamBox is one of the opportunities to find their pathway.”

— LEE ANN HENNINGER  
Teacher, Castle View  
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