

Professional Development Workshop Assignment

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Author Note

I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP ASSIGNMENT**Four Articles:**

Grace, M. R. (2019). *Teacher perspectives on content literacy in elementary schools* (Doctoral dissertation, Kennesaw State University). KSU Digital Commons.

https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/teachleaddoc_etd/38/

Howell, P. B., Barlow, A. T., & Dyches, J. (2021). Disciplinary literacy: Successes and challenges of professional development. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 64(5), 555–565. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaal.1136>

Project CALI. (n.d.). *Content-area literacy instruction*. University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education. <https://projectcali.uconn.edu/>

Smith, T. L., & Robinson, M. A. (2020). Teacher perceptions and implementation of a content-area literacy professional development program. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 10(1), 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.5590/JERAP.2020.10.1.04>

Checklist of evidence-based practices in professional development:

1. Focuses on explicit literacy instruction strategies, including vocabulary, comprehension, and writing across subject areas (Grace, 2019; Project CALI, n.d.)
2. Aligns professional development with disciplinary literacy practices specific to content areas such as science, social studies, and mathematics (Howell et al., 2021)
3. Includes job-embedded coaching and classroom modeling to support teacher implementation of literacy strategies (Smith & Robinson, 2020; Project CALI, n.d.)
4. Encourages teacher collaboration through PLCs or team-based learning to refine literacy instruction (Grace, 2019; Howell et al., 2021)
5. Uses student literacy assessment data to guide PD focus and instructional decisions (Howell et al., 2021; Project CALI, n.d.)
6. Provides structured opportunities for teacher reflection and feedback to improve instructional practice (Grace, 2019; Smith & Robinson, 2020)
7. Supplies practical, classroom-ready resources and lesson models to increase implementation fidelity (Smith & Robinson, 2020)
8. Supports differentiation strategies to address diverse literacy needs, including struggling readers and multilingual learners (Grace, 2019; Howell et al., 2021)
9. Ensures administrative and leadership support to sustain literacy-focused professional development initiatives (Smith & Robinson, 2020; Project CALI, n.d.)
10. Connects professional development directly to classroom practice and measurable student literacy outcomes (Grace, 2019; Howell et al., 2021)
11. Grounds professional development in scientifically based literacy research and evidence-based frameworks (Howell et al., 2021; Project CALI, n.d.)

Request to Review & Present Professional Development Letter:**Request to Review & Present Professional Development**

Lisa Warren

Principal

Shelburne Middle School

Dear Ms. Warren,

I am currently a candidate in the EDRS699: Internship-Reading Specialist program at Liberty University. To fulfill the requirements for licensure, I kindly request permission to interview you and Dr. Turner about the school's current professional development plan, practices, and needs. Through my current graduate class and readings in scholarly journals, I have identified a list of evidence-based practices related to professional development. I am eager to discover how these best practices may be utilized by your school. I would also like to explore this area to find an appropriate topic related to my area of specialization, which would be beneficial for me to present at an upcoming professional development opportunity.

To learn more about the needs of your school and to develop my expertise as a reading specialist, I would like to evaluate the school's professional development plan using the attached rubric. I would also appreciate it if you could provide any written documentation, such as School Improvement Plans and Curriculum Mapping Projects, about the school's current professional development plan, so I could use it to guide me in creating a professional development opportunity for teachers at your school.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kendra Thompson

6th Grade U.S. History Teacher

Future Program Specialist

Five Interview Questions

1. How does your school or district provide professional development to help teachers integrate literacy strategies into content-area instruction (e.g., science, social studies, math)?

Response: We offer monthly Professional Development courses, known as SCS University (Staunton City Schools University). These professional development courses are designed for teachers in our district based off student needs and what we observe when visiting classrooms and in PLC meetings with our teachers. Using literature in the classrooms, other than in ELA classes would be a great added benefit to assist our students especially with vocabulary and comprehension.

2. What specific literacy practices or strategies are emphasized in professional development, and how are they supported by research?

Response: Since the VA Literacy Act has been passed, it has been a top priority for SCS to make sure we are offering quality training to our staff on the Science of Reading. We have had classes for teachers where we can teach different strategies to struggling readers. We use research based practices and trainings.

3. How do teachers receive ongoing support, coaching, or collaboration opportunities to implement literacy strategies effectively after training?

At SCS, we pride ourselves on our PLC meetings, coaching cycles, and supporting staff. Our instructional coach will set up times with teachers to plan, model, and implement lessons. Often, the coach can model a lesson or co-teach and give immediate feedback. During PLC meetings, we can look over the data and see what is working or not working, and talk as a team to see what the next steps should be.

4. How is student literacy data used to guide professional development decisions and instructional adjustments across content areas?

The assessment data drives our professional development and instructional alignment. We use the data to pinpoint any issues that students may be having and we use our observational data as well to see how we can better support staff to meet student needs.

5. What challenges have teachers faced when implementing content-area literacy practices, and what strategies or supports have been most effective in overcoming them?

At this time, teachers are focused on making sure they meet all the state standards. Having the training on how to use literature in a math classroom or a science classroom may be beneficial for staff to see that we can use cross curricular instruction to amplify student needs and practice. For example, you have been working with the ELA teachers to work in ELA standards with your history standards. This way, your students are getting a double dose of those ELA standards and they are getting real word practice using those skills.

School's current professional development plan:

Attached Here- [SCS University Flyer](#)

Professional development workshop on a topic:

Using Literacy in Content Area Classrooms

Plan documenting the reason for selecting the PD topic:

For my professional development topic, I chose to focus on using literacy in the content area classes. This is important to me as I currently teach U.S. History in a 6th-grade middle school. I find that students find instruction much more interesting when I can connect the content to a story or some form of literature. This prompted me to want to learn more about using literature in my classroom. I chose this topic based on the interview data from the principal, a review of our district's professional development plan, and research on effective literacy-focused professional development, as well as the reading specialist standards from the International Literacy Association (ILA, 2018).

After the interview and looking over the professional developments that have been offered this year, it is clear that sessions are designed to fit student needs, what administrators see in classroom observations, and our weekly PLC meeting discussions. The principal noted that my use of literature in my U.S. History classroom has shown a benefit for students' vocabulary development and reading comprehension. This shows that pushing literature into other content areas, beyond ELA, can improve student achievement and give students time to practice in those areas.

The school district has made it a top priority to make sure that our curriculum and instruction is aligned with the Virginia Literacy Act and the Science of Reading. By providing professional development on research-based strategies for struggling readers, the district has made it clear to the staff that this is a top priority. This shows that a strong foundation in early elementary school is important, as well as early intervention. The data collected for this project shows that there is still a need to expand literacy training to secondary and content area teachers. My goal is to provide support and development on cross-curricular literacy in the content areas.

After interviewing the principal, it led me to realize that we get support through our PLC meetings, coaching cycles, lesson models, co-teaching, and feedback support from the coach or administration. These align with research that emphasizes that coaching, collaboration, and support improve implementation of literacy practices (Smith & Robinson, 2020; Project CALI, n.d.). Teachers would also have time to reflect on data by using assessment results and observational data to guide instructional changes. Howell, Barlow, and Dyches (2021) state that effective professional development should be content specific, collaborative, and have measurable student outcomes. This would help prove the importance of strengthening content-area literacy supports.

After looking over the school districts professional development plans from this year, there was a clear strong emphasis on standard alignments and the science of reading initiatives. There is a limited amount of professional development options for cross curricular work in the secondary schools. Teachers state that with state standards and pacing it is often difficult to incorporate literacy into their plans. My example of using ELA standards while teaching history was a positive example of how it can work. Giving ideas to assist these efforts would enhance instruction and student literacy outcomes.

Grace (2019) found that PLC-based collaboration and structured reflection improve teachers' ability to integrate vocabulary, comprehension, and writing into content instruction. Project CALI (n.d.) shows that coaching cycles, text-based comprehension strategies, and data-driven decision-making can strengthen teachers' confidence and classroom implementation of literacy practices. This data shows that professional development should be sustained, collaborative, classroom-embedded, and grounded in research-based literacy instruction.

The professional development chosen would align with the reading specialist standards that emphasize instructional leadership, professional learning, evidence-based practice, and collaboration (ILA, 2018). Reading specialists and coaches are expected to lead literacy initiatives, support content area teachers, and promote research based practices. By focusing on the evidence based literacy in content areas, the professional development supports the reading specialist's role in building up teachers, working on cross curricular literacy instruction, and improving student achievement.

In summary, this professional development is justified by teacher need, district priority, research on effective literacy, and professional standards. By stretching content area literacy professional development will grow instructional practice, promote cross curricular alignment, and improve students' reading, writing, vocabulary, and comprehension across all disciplines. This will also show the importance of literacy in all types of education.

References

- Grace, M. R. (2019). *Teacher perspectives on content literacy in elementary schools* (Doctoral dissertation, Kennesaw State University). KSU Digital Commons. https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/teachleaddoc_etd/38/
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- Project CALI. (n.d.). *Content-area literacy instruction*. University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education. <https://projectcali.uconn.edu/>
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