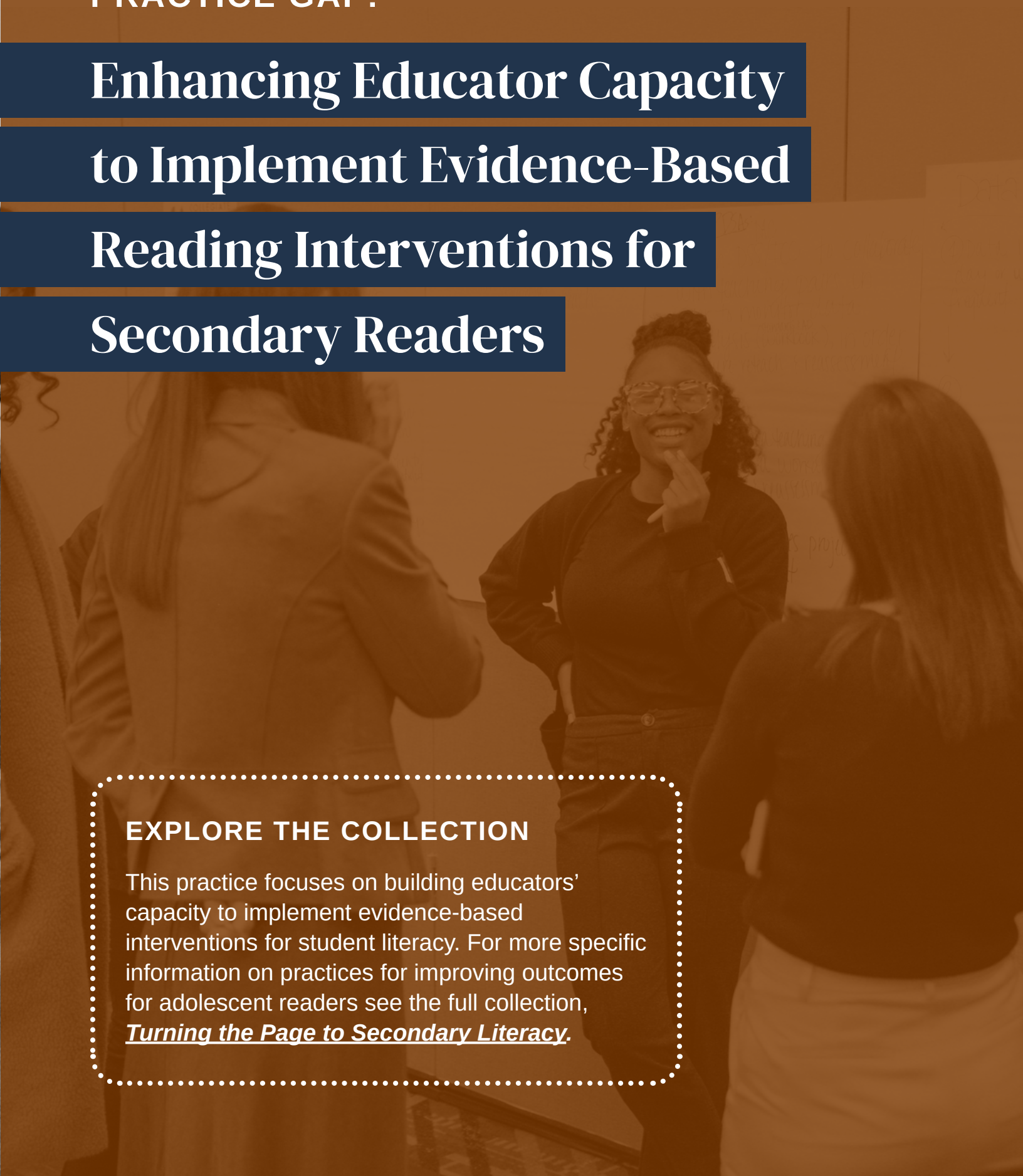
CLOSING THE RESEARCH-TO-IMPACT PRACTICE GAP:

Enhancing Educator Capacity to Implement Evidence-Based Reading Interventions for Secondary Readers



EXPLORE THE COLLECTION

This practice focuses on building educators' capacity to implement evidence-based interventions for student literacy. For more specific information on practices for improving outcomes for adolescent readers see the full collection, ***Turning the Page to Secondary Literacy***.

Snapshot

WHAT IS THE PRACTICE?

Practitioner-focused professional development and **aligned coaching** that builds the knowledge and skills of secondary teachers to effectively provide evidence-based interventions (EBIs) aligned with the science of reading to adolescents with disabilities.

Key Terms for this Practice

What do we mean by *practitioner-focused professional development?*

For the purposes of this practice, practitioner-focused professional development refers to professional development sessions that provide educators with structured opportunities to:

1. **build knowledge** of evidence-based instructional practices aligned with the science of adolescent reading,
2. **apply learnings** through in-session reflection and practice,
3. **engage in collaborative learning** to build collective knowledge and establish mutual accountability, and
4. **adapt practices** for the specific needs of the populations served by the participants with a focus on culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities.

What do we mean by *aligned coaching?*

For the purposes of this practice, coaching refers to individualized teacher coaching that is:

1. **content-specific,** with the intended outcome of increasing teachers' capacity to implement evidence-based practices specific to improving reading outcomes for adolescent readers with disabilities, and
2. **job-embedded,** meaning that coaching experiences occur during the teachers' contracted school days and are directly aligned with their instructional responsibilities.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

National assessments of reading consistently indicate that an alarmingly high number of secondary students lack the foundational reading skills necessary to meet grade-level reading benchmarks.[1] These low levels of reading proficiency are particularly pronounced for Black and Latinx students as well as students with disabilities. Low reading levels present significant barriers to students accessing, making meaning from, and finding joy in rich, complex, grade-level texts and ultimately limit students' options for education and employment.

Snapshot

CONTINUED

To improve literacy outcomes in students — particularly Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty — educators must be well-versed in how to teach reading. Elementary teachers typically receive training in teaching reading as part of their credentialing, but secondary teachers typically do not. Though a comprehensive body of research points to practices that are most likely to close the gaps for adolescent readers with disabilities, these practices are not consistently implemented in secondary schools and classrooms, and secondary teachers consistently report that they do not feel equipped to teach foundational reading skills.

Encouragingly, research shows that sustained, intensive professional development that focuses on specific academic content and is connected to practice is associated with student achievement gains.[2] Providing professional development that meets these evidence-based criteria has significant potential to improve reading outcomes for students.

WHY IT WORKS

Practitioner-focused professional development and aligned coaching bridge theory and practice, supporting the consistent implementation of evidence-based interventions in classrooms and schools. The professional development practices described in this case study help secondary educators understand and apply the science of reading, while equipping them with the tools and coaching to teach reading skills as part of their core instruction.

The guidance contained in these stories shows how schools can build the capacity of instructional coaches and district staff to craft effective and efficient professional development with the goal of consistent implementation of evidence-based interventions aligned with the science of reading. These best practices emerged from Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) on evidence-based literacy interventions as part of the Networked Improvement Community for Students with Disabilities (NIC). Together with corresponding recommended resources, the best practices provide a blueprint for schools across the country to build educator capacity for teaching reading.



The Challenge

How can schools support secondary literacy teachers to implement evidenced-based reading interventions?

The NIC's literacy-focused PLC was initially established to build the capacity of systems-level leaders to design and deliver literacy-focused professional development within their own networks. After the first year, the Marshall team found that the content was not consistently transferring to classroom-based educators. Further, participants consistently reported a lack of teacher knowledge related to adolescent literacy instruction as a key barrier within their improvement efforts. This is aligned with research on the topic, which finds that while the science of reading provides a great deal of guidance regarding how individuals learn to read, why some struggle, and the most effective instructional approaches for teaching reading, evidence-based practices are not consistently implemented in classrooms and schools,[3] and this disconnect between theory and practice disproportionately impacts students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and students learning English.[4]

What is *the science of reading*?

The Reading League proposes this as a common definition for the term:

"The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties."[6]

One contributor to this research-to-practice gap may be a lack of knowledge of evidence-based practices on the part of secondary teachers. This group consistently reports that both teacher preparation programs and job-embedded professional development opportunities fail to equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to address reading deficits for adolescent readers.[5] To build confidence in their capacity to implement evidence-based reading interventions and to ultimately improve reading outcomes, secondary teachers need access to ongoing professional learning opportunities that focus on student learning, are content-specific, and are connected to instructional practice.

Along with the Marshall team, Green Dot Public Schools, Noble Schools, and Uncommon Schools, the three participating partner schools within the NIC's literacy PLC, needed to find a way to close these gaps and ensure that their adolescent students were receiving the evidenced-based reading interventions that they needed.

The Practice

Year-Long Practitioner-Focused Professional Learning Community to Build Educator Capacity

The Marshall team, in partnership with educators from the three networks and NIC content expert Genevieve Thomas, decided to shift the focus of the PLC to be practitioner-focused and to include classroom-based educators and the network-level staff from the participating networks. The intention behind this shift was to build capacity and alignment across levels within the systems. The PLC was redesigned to increase educator and staff capacity to implement evidence-based instructional practices for adolescent readers with disabilities. A subset of PLC members participated in regular, job-embedded coaching with a literacy content expert with the goal of increasing the transfer of research to practice within their classrooms.

Because the intended outcome of the PLC was to bridge the research-to-practice gap by increasing participants' capacity to implement evidence-based reading practices, the PLC used a review of the literature on effective reading practices for adolescent readers with disabilities — "Evidence-Based Strategies for Reading Instruction of Older Students with Learning Disabilities," by Roberts et al.[7] — as the foundation for their scope and sequence of topics. This research summary outlines five instructional priorities for adolescent readers with disabilities: word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. The **scope and sequence** of the PLC was designed to build capacity within each of these instructional areas.

Intended Outcomes

The goals of the PLC were to support participants to:

- **connect** with other educators from across the NIC to **build community, increase capacity** to implement evidence-based instructional practices, **collaboratively seek solutions** to common barriers, and share and **celebrate successes**;
- describe the **evidence-based strategies** for reading instruction of adolescents with disabilities, including **summarizing the essential research**; and
- **modify instructional approaches** and materials to more effectively include evidence-based practices for supporting reading development in secondary readers.

Professional Learning Community Structure

The PLC was designed and facilitated by Genevieve Thomas, literacy content expert, in partnership with members of the Marshall Improvement team. PLC participants included teachers as well as school- and network-level leaders from the participating networks. The PLC met monthly for 90-minute virtual sessions, which included one hour of knowledge building and application around a specific element of reading, followed by 30 minutes of opt-in small-group or one-on-one coaching with the content area expert.

PLC sessions were carefully designed to:

- summarize the most relevant research findings related to the specific literacy area of focus;
- provide practical applications that participants could immediately implement into their planning and instruction; and
- provide these experiences within a short time frame in order to work within the schedules of busy educators.

Instructional Resources

One way in which the practitioner-focused PLC supported participants to close the research-to-practice gap was through the creation of streamlined instructional resources that clearly summarized the research behind an evidence-based practice and provided concrete recommendations and resources to support implementation. Through facilitating the PLC sessions and collaborating with the Marshall team, Genevieve learned about participants' instructional priorities and needs and how they aligned with their larger organizational goals for improvement. In response, Genevieve was able to create practical, research-informed resources to support participant instructional planning and execution. Examples include:

- **a protocol for repeated oral reading** (an evidence-based practice for developing reading fluency),
- **an instructional progression for teaching syllabication strategies** (an evidence-based practice for developing word study skills), and
- **planning considerations for facilitating independent daily reading and student conferencing.**

Digging into Evidence-Based Practices for Vocabulary Development

One of the instructional priorities for adolescents with reading disabilities is vocabulary, and the PLC covered evidence-based practices for developing vocabulary across two sessions. In the first session, participants learned key findings from the research on vocabulary development and instruction; for example:

- Vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated with reading comprehension.
- Effective vocabulary instruction includes explicit instruction in specific word meanings, word-learning strategies, and building word consciousness.

After learning key research findings, participants learned about an evidence-based instructional sequence for teaching vocabulary. They first learned the steps of the sequence, then explored each step via a think-aloud example facilitated by Genevieve. Finally, they had the opportunity to practice designing an instructional sequence following the model and using vocabulary words from the texts they were using in their ELA and reading classes. After sharing their examples and hearing feedback from a partner, the session closed with participants documenting their key learnings and committing to next steps.

Based on the session survey, 100% of participants felt that the session increased their capacity to design and deliver evidence-based practices for increasing student vocabulary.

Coaching Structure

PLC members also had access to individual and small group coaching between PLC meetings. The intended outcome of coaching experiences was to provide individual support to teachers as they worked to apply the learnings from the content-focused PLC sessions to their local contexts and support them in accelerating their improvement efforts for students with disabilities. Coaching activities included:

- co-creating instructional materials;
- analyzing student data in order to draw conclusions and inform planning;
- modeling, practicing, and receiving feedback on specific instructional routines; and
- designing instructional protocols.

Putting Word Study in Action at Uncommon Schools

In an early coaching conversation, Val and Genevieve worked together to co-analyze the results of an oral reading fluency curriculum-based measurement that Val had administered to the students in her reading intervention class. Val and Genevieve identified that one root cause of low fluency was difficulty reading multisyllabic words.

As a participant in the literacy PLC, Val learned about effective **word study instructional practices**, including teaching syllabication and building morphological awareness. In her coaching conversations with Genevieve, she developed a hypothesis that explicitly teaching these strategies would improve students' skill in reading multisyllabic words, thus improving their reading fluency and ultimately reading comprehension. Val and Genevieve collaborated over the course of several coaching conversations to plan instructional strategies, debrief their effectiveness, and make modifications to instructional plans based on learnings. After several coaching cycles, the instructional protocol for this reading intervention class now consistently includes **explicit word study** instruction using evidence-based practices.



Val and Genevieve co-teach a word study lesson during a NIC site visit with Marshall Street.

Implementation at a Glance

Enabling Conditions provides a high-level view of what to consider when implementing this practice, describing the minimum conditions needed for successful implementation, including resources, mindsets, staffing, and recommended time allocation.

Enabling Conditions

Prerequisites	School and district commitment to literacy instruction for secondary readers, including: • Dedicated and protected time for educators to participate in professional learning experiences • Specified time in the school day for differentiated reading instruction that enables application of professional learning content (e.g., pull-out reading intervention courses or co-taught courses where differentiated reading instruction regularly occurs) • Strategic alignment of the professional learning approach with broader school priorities
Recommended Materials	• Professional learning scope and sequence for session topics • A central location for participant materials and resources to be shared (e.g., shared folder, website, or other digital platform) • Coaching protocol or agenda
Staff Commitment	• A **content expert** with deep knowledge of (1) the science of reading and its application to adolescents with disabilities and (2) principles of adult learning and effective professional development design. This could be an internal team member or an external partner. – The cost of contracting external expertise varies significantly by provider but is typically between $150 and $400 per hour for virtual professional development and $1,500 to $4,000 per day for in-person professional development. • One or more individuals to provide aligned and individualized **coaching** to teachers, e.g., the content area expert designing professional learning opportunities or an instructional coach working closely with the content area expert. • **Staff Coverage:** Professional learning opportunities, including coaching, may require additional resource allocation, such as substitute teachers, if provided within the contracted day, or compensation, if provided outside of contract hours.
Recommended Time Allocation	**Teachers:** • Release time to attend PLC meetings monthly (typically 60–90 minutes monthly) • Coaching sessions between teacher and coach (30–45 minutes at least 1–2 times monthly) • Time to gather student data and revise instructional plans to integrate learning from PLC (time will vary based on skill)

Recommended Time Allocation (continued)

Content Area Expert and Coaches:

- At the start of the PLC, planning time of a half-day or more to design professional learning experiences and/or aligned coaching in collaboration with key stakeholders
- Monthly time to facilitate PLC and complete follow-up steps (minimum 2–3 hours monthly)
- Time to attend and follow up on coaching sessions (30–60 minutes at least 1–2 times per month per session)

School and Central Leadership:

- Strategic planning time with core team members to establish the enabling conditions, identify a content area expert to lead the design of the professional learning activities, determine who will facilitate coaching experiences, and align the professional learning approach with broader school priorities
- Time to plan, participate in, and monitor the ongoing effectiveness of professional learning activities

How to Implement this Practice

Step 1: Plan Professional Development Opportunities that Build Teacher Capacity to Implement Evidence-Based Reading Practices for Adolescents with Disabilities

The process for planning the professional development series is nonlinear. The order of the steps that follow will vary based on each school or network's local context, and some steps may not be needed.

Identify a content area expert.

Identify a content area expert who will lead the design of the professional development series and the individual sessions. This should be an individual with expertise in the science of reading as it relates to adolescents with disabilities, as well as experience designing professional development for adult learners. If no internal team members have this expertise, source, vet, and contract with an external consultant.

Articulate a purpose for the professional development series.

Articulate a purpose that clearly connects to improved reading outcomes and increased access to grade-level texts and content for adolescents with disabilities. Explicitly grounding the purpose of the professional learning experiences within the school's or network's priorities for students with disabilities, with a focus on increased access to grade-level text and content, ensures that equitable access and outcomes for all learners remain the north star.

The following questions may serve as helpful catalysts for articulating the purpose of the professional development series:

- What are the current, related school and/or network priorities, and how might this professional development serve to further progress toward these priorities?
- What does the data currently tell us about reading achievement and progress for students with disabilities? How does this compare to the general student population?
- What are teachers saying about their readiness to implement evidence-based reading practices for students with disabilities? What do performance evaluations and/or instructional observations suggest about the knowledge and skills teachers need to develop?
- How will building teacher knowledge and skill around evidence-based reading practices for students with disabilities move the school or network closer to established goals and priorities?

Identify participants.

Start by determining the scale of the implementation. If practitioner-focused professional development related to evidence-based reading practices for students with disabilities is new for the school or network, consider testing the structure with a smaller group of users before spreading and scaling. When starting small, select participants who can commit to participating in the experiences, express excitement about the content, will work to implement the practices in their planning and instruction, and are willing to transparently share their learnings and feedback in the interest of improving the structure before scaling. To create the strongest possible experience, leaders can participate alongside practitioners. This adds both support and accountability.

At scale, participants in the professional learning experiences should include not only the educators who are responsible for planning and implementing reading instruction for adolescents with disabilities, but also those who coach them. If students with disabilities are educated primarily in general education settings, both special and general educators should be equally involved. Determine participation expectations for educators, including who is required to participate and who can voluntarily participate.

Design the scope and sequence.

When designing the professional development scope and sequence of topics, consider both the intended outcomes of the series and the current, relevant research related to those outcomes. For example, if an intended outcome is for participants to implement valid assessments and analyze the results to identify specific student reading needs, review the literature on this topic, and extract key findings to anchor the scope and sequence of topics. See **Further Learning** for suggested articles summarizing the most important science of reading concepts for secondary educators of students with disabilities.

Generate a list of learning needs for the target participants in relation to these outcomes. For example, if the participants have a strong foundation in best practices for vocabulary instruction following a previous school-wide focus on vocabulary, but little depth of knowledge related to word study and fluency instruction, consider a focus on word study and fluency that explicitly builds on participants' knowledge about effective vocabulary instruction.

Determine the number of professional development sessions, aiming to convene at least monthly, and map out the topic for each session.

Create a plan for measuring effectiveness.

Based on the intended outcomes for the professional development series, consider the metrics you will use to measure impact and effectiveness. Consider how you might measure the following:

- Participant perceptions of the professional learning experiences
- Participant learnings (i.e., what participants know and can do as a result of the professional learning experiences)
- Application to practice (the extent to which participants apply learnings in their planning and instruction)
- Student outcomes on school or district measures of reading performance and growth

See the **How to Measure** section of this chapter for more guidance on metrics and measurement.

Define the team of individuals that will meet to review the metrics of success as well as the cadence for those meetings. This might include the content developer, professional learning facilitator, coaches, school leaders, and network or district leadership. Convening on a quarterly basis will allow the team to modify the plan in response to participant feedback and needs.

Step 2: Design the Individual Professional Learning Sessions

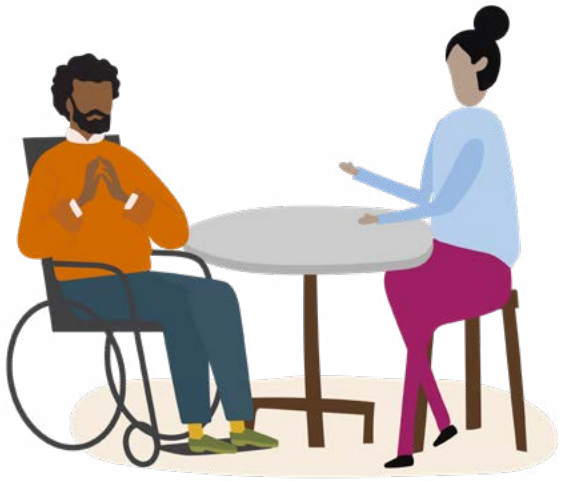
Determine the intended outcomes for each session.

Begin planning with the end in mind, focusing on the series-level outcomes for professional learning. Consider, “As a result of participating in this professional development series, what do we want educators to know, believe, and be able to do?” For example:

- Participants will know and be able to define the literacy instructional focus areas for adolescents with disabilities.
- Participants will believe that explicit and systematic instruction aligned with identified student needs will result in improved reading outcomes.
- Participants will increase their sense of self-efficacy related to designing and implementing evidence-based reading instruction for adolescents with disabilities.

Plan the individual sessions.

With these outcomes in mind, generate activities that will support participants in achieving the outcomes. Activities should include facilitated practice and application of learning to participants’ individual contexts, as well as structured opportunities to connect and collaborate with others. Plan ways for participants to actively capture learnings and make meaning across the session.



Finally, create the accompanying resources and materials. These might include the following:

- A **facilitator's agenda** with a pacing guide and detailed talking points for each activity
- A **participant guide** that includes the intended outcomes, an agenda, and a place for capturing notes, learnings, and next steps
- A collection of additional related resources participants can explore for further learning
- A **slide deck**

Reimagining Reading Comprehension Instruction

One session of the practitioner-focused literacy PLC implemented within the NIC was focused on evidence-based practices for supporting reading comprehension instruction. The purpose of the session was articulated as "reimagining reading comprehension instruction as an opportunity to explicitly develop the specific subskills that will support secondary students, particularly secondary students with reading and language disabilities, in accessing and making meaning from complex, grade-level texts in order to ensure equitable access to core content for our target population."

After clarifying the purpose of the session, Genevieve designed activities to support participants in achieving this outcome. These included:

- a reflection activity in which participants shared in partners their current understandings of reading comprehension;
- a summary of the most relevant and current research related to reading comprehension instruction for adolescents with disabilities, followed by an opportunity for participants to process and capture learnings;
- breakout conversations where participants could choose one aspect of reading comprehension instruction to dig into more deeply with peers; and
- time for participants to consider applications to their current instructional planning practices and to commit to action-oriented next steps.

Step 3: Deliver the Professional Development Sessions

Facilitate professional development sessions.

It is important that sessions are led by strong facilitators who possess cultural humility and an awareness of cultural and identity-sustaining pedagogy. This is particularly important for our target population. Effective facilitators acknowledge the ways in which dynamics of race, class, and ability impact reading achievement for the target population while simultaneously communicating high expectations for both students and educators.[8]

Use feedback to assess and improve.

Gather feedback after each session, and use it to assess impact and inform the design of subsequent sessions. While articulating a scope and sequence for the professional development series will aid in planning individual sessions, it is also important to view the scope and sequence as a flexible roadmap

that will be adapted based on participant needs and feedback. Collecting feedback at the end of each professional learning experience helps to know both the extent to which session objectives were met and what participants may need for future sessions and coaching experiences. Feedback can be gathered using a variety of methods, including surveys, pre- and post-assessments, or frameworks such as "3-2-1," in which participants share three key learnings from the experience, two immediate, action-oriented next steps, and one lingering question or idea they intend to explore further.

Adjust the scope and sequence as needed.

A team should regularly revisit and revise as necessary the professional development scope and sequence. The team should review feedback, collaboratively synthesize trends, identify pressing participant needs, and brainstorm responses. After feedback has been reviewed and analyzed, plan to communicate back to participants what was learned from their feedback and how the professional learning approach is being modified to address their needs.

Step 4: Provide Content Area Coaching Between Professional Development Sessions

Plan for coaching.

Determine who will lead the coaching experiences between professional development sessions. This might be the individual that designed and facilitated the professional development, or it could be another team member. First and foremost, the coach should have a strong foundation in teacher coaching practices. The coach should also be well-versed in evidence-based reading practices for adolescents with disabilities, which implies that they should be attending sessions alongside the teachers they coach.

Align the coaching approach with any relevant school or network coaching models or processes. For example, if the district has a specific protocol that is followed in other instructional coaching experiences, apply that same framework for these literacy-focused coaching sessions.

Determine the frequency of coaching sessions, ideally biweekly, but with at least one coaching session occurring between each professional learning session. Schedule coaching sessions with individual teachers early in the process of planning professional learning to support consistency and accountability, but practice flexibility and allow for adjustments to the schedule as needed.

Facilitate coaching experiences.

Coaches should establish a student-centered outcome for each coaching touchpoint in collaboration with the teacher, and outcomes should clearly align with the reading instructional knowledge and skills developed in the professional development sessions. Coaching experiences should include active practice of instructional planning and/or literacy practices, along with feedback whenever possible. Both the coach and the teacher are responsible for documenting key decisions and next steps, and for following through on their respective next steps between coaching touchpoints.

Practice Snapshot

SPREADING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AT NOBLE SCHOOLS

Several special education teachers at Noble Schools have been implementing a structured protocol for developing reading fluency since the 2021–22 school year. After seeing consistent implementation of this practice result in improved reading fluency for students, the special education leadership team decided to provide a professional learning experience to other educators within the network in an effort to spread the promising practice.

The team first set out to identify content area experts to design and deliver the professional development session. They solicited an internal co-teaching team, special education teacher Megan Murphy and general education World History teacher Derek DeHaan, who had been successfully implementing a reading fluency protocol in their co-taught World History class for several months, to lead the work.

Megan and Derek designed a professional development session and key training materials in alignment with the recommended practices described within this chapter. First, they explicitly shared the "why" by summarizing important research that clearly establishes the role of reading fluency in the ability to make meaning from text. They thoughtfully connected the specific topic of fluency to their overall network goals, sharing that "Literacy is the key to healthy, choice-filled lives for our students."

Within the session, Megan and Derek clearly communicated the evidence-based practices for developing reading fluency by sharing a specific instructional protocol, showing a video of their class engaged in the protocol, and reviewing the resources they developed to support implementation of the practice. They built participant buy-in by sharing data that clearly suggested an improvement in student reading outcomes as a result of participating in the reading fluency protocol, as well as testimonials from students. The session concluded with opportunities for participants to choose from several optional activities designed to support them in applying learning to their own instructional contexts.

Megan and Derek facilitated the session twice during Noble professional development days, in which teachers could choose sessions aligned with their instructional priorities. Across the two offerings over 50 Noble teachers opted to attend. Feedback collected following the session indicated that a significant number of attendees planned to incorporate reading fluency practices into their instructional planning after attending the session.

See ***Repeated Reading: Building Oral Reading Fluency in Secondary Readers*** for comprehensive guidance on how to implement instruction designed to improve students' oral reading fluency.

The Impact

Empowering Educators to Put Knowledge in Action

Upon conclusion of the year-long practitioner-focused PLC, 100% of participants reported that the PLC:

- enhanced their knowledge related to adolescent literacy,
- provided them with practical tools and resources that were applicable to their work, and
- was instrumental in addressing challenges faced within their roles and local contexts.

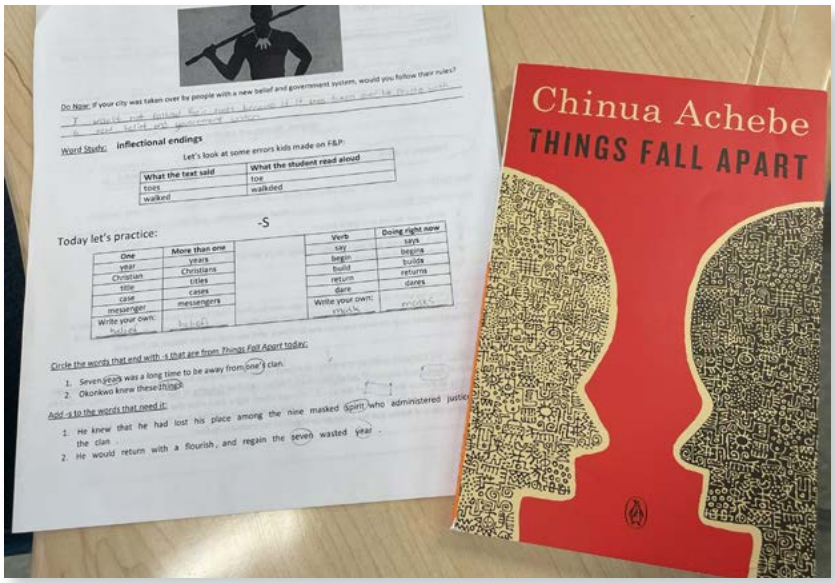
Feedback from participants collected over the course of the PLC suggests that structured professional development sessions and aligned coaching were successful in achieving the intended outcomes and enhancing NIC members' continuous improvement efforts. The shift to a practitioner focus for the 2022–23 school year more effectively met the needs of both systems-level and classroom-level participants. For example, Glynis Shulters, a member of the Green Dot improvement team working at the network level, reflected on the ways in which participating in the PLC supported her team's efforts to enact both tiered literacy assessments and evidence-based practices for supporting reading fluency: "The Literacy PLC has helped me deepen my knowledge base of the science of reading, which has helped me be able to support our site team at Watts to create a multiple gating approach and structures for fluency intervention to begin." Val Dutta, the literacy innovation specialist and teacher of reading intervention classes within the Uncommon network, reported, "I had not taught word study to high school students before, and this PLC has given me materials that I can directly use with teachers and students. The students are very engaged in this sequence of materials and building real skill, thanks to this PLC."

The applied learning achieved through the PLC also increased educators' capacity to implement a variety of evidence-based instructional practices for adolescent readers with disabilities across NIC partners:

- At **Green Dot California**, explicit professional development has been designed to build the knowledge and skill sets of educators to implement **oral reading fluency interventions** as they spread and scale efforts. This includes an initial team training with application activities, guidance documents grounded in the research and practical knowledge from the PLC members, and a gradual release coaching model. Additionally, PLC participation inspired conversations about research on motivation for struggling readers, which led one school to implement an incentive program that increased software engagement and Lexile growth.
- At **Uncommon Schools**, Val Dutta continues to apply the knowledge acquired from the PLC in Academic Prep and other reading intervention spaces, focusing on building reading skills within the context of grade-level instruction. Uncommon has spread their instructional framework and literacy coaching practice to additional schools, with the intent to scale it further in the upcoming school year.
- At **Noble Schools**, PLC members are integrating the research and practice they gathered within the PLC to construct and adopt district-wide professional development and **related resources** for educators on building reading skills. They have trained classroom teachers and support staff in the science of reading and the implementation of a structured repeated-reading protocol to apply evidence-based interventions in core classes. The protocol helped **students build reading fluency** while learning course content.

Experiences like these have the potential to increase teacher knowledge, skill, and sense of self-efficacy, and to build shared language and collaborative partnerships across systems.

As teachers at participating schools become more skilled at implementing these practices, reading progress will be accelerated and students with disabilities will be more likely to be equitably engaged in grade-level content and instruction and more likely to experience success in school and beyond.



Uncommon student work highlights how evidence-based reading interventions are designed to align with grade level instruction.

FURTHER LEARNING

Effective Instruction for Adolescent Struggling Readers: A Practice Brief
CENTER ON INSTRUCTION

Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy
ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION

Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION EVALUATION AND REGIONAL ASSISTANCE

Evidence-Based Strategies for Older Students with Reading Disabilities
GREG ROBERTS, JOSEPH K. TORGESEN, ALISON BOARDMAN, AND NANCY SCAMMACCA

*The **Marshall Street Networked Improvement Community (NIC)** is a three-year intentional community of 10 public charter school networks nationwide aiming to make dramatic gains for Black and Latinx students with disabilities experiencing poverty. Collectively, the 10 networks identified over 20 best practices that improve learning outcomes and school culture for students positioned furthest from opportunity. Three of the 10 schools participated in the professional learning community (PLC) described in this case study.*

Appendix

How to Measure

When implementing a practitioner-focused PLC structure, measuring how useful, usable, and utilized the practice is by team members and across the school system can accelerate learning to improve outcomes for students. At minimum, these measures are most essential:

PRIMARY MEASURES					
Measure Type	**Data Collection Type**	**Question Asked**	**Results**	**What does success look like?**	**Examples and Notes**
Outcome	Reading assessments	Are the students of teachers who participate in professional learning growing as readers?	Student growth on internal reading/ ELA assessments	Increased student achievement compared to (1) prior to implementation and/or (2) students of teachers who do not participate in professional learning	Leverage the reading assessments already in place within the school or network to evaluate impact on student outcomes.
Outcome	Informal assessments before, during, and after professional development sessions	What do teachers know as a result of this professional learning experience? What are they now able to do?	Percentage of teachers who demonstrate increased knowledge related to key learning targets	Increasing the percentage of teachers able to demonstrate mastery of key learning targets, until reaching 100%	Informal assessments of key learnings can easily be included in feedback surveys.
Outcome	Teacher perception data	Do teachers report that the professional learning experiences meet their stated objectives?	Percentage of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that professional learning experiences are resulting in increased efficacy in implementing evidence-based reading instruction	Teacher sense of self-efficacy related to implementation of evidence-based literacy practices increases over the course of the professional learning experiences.	Align teacher perception surveys with the specific objectives for professional learning experiences to most directly measure increases in sense of self-efficacy.

Additional measures can guide a team to know whether practitioner-focused professional learning opportunities are leading to the desired improvements for students:

SECONDARY MEASURES					
Measure Type	**Data Collection Type**	**Question Asked**	**Results**	**What does success look like?**	**Examples and Notes**
Process	Professional development attendance Coaching touchpoints	Do teachers value the development provided via the professional development series and coaching?	Percentage of teachers participating in professional development sessions/ coaching opportunities	Aim for 100% attendance for each session.	Track the percentage of target participants who join each professional development session and who participate in scheduled coaching experiences.

Notes

1 US Department of Education, *National Assessment of Education Progress*

2 Darling-Hammond et al., "State of the Profession"; Basma and Savage, "Teacher Professional Development"

3 Castles et al., "Ending the Reading Wars"

4 Seidenberg, *Language at the Speed of Sight*

5 Ness, "Reading Comprehension Strategies"

6 The Reading League, *Science of Reading*

7 Roberts et al., "Evidence-Based Strategies"

8 Terry, "Delivering on the Promise"

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