Professional Learning Communities Facilitator’s Guide
Reading Deeper and Actively Engaging with Texts
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Introduction

This facilitator’s guide is designed to assist professional learning communities in applying research-based practices to activate, support, and reveal student thinking. Through this collaborative learning experience, educators will explore strategies that support reading for depth, reflect on their own practices, and analyze the impact of specific teaching moves on student learning. These resources will also assist educators in applying these practices as they use Actively Learn, an online literacy platform.

To learn more about the practices covered in this guide and how they support deeper learning, see Actively Learn’s research paper, “Stop Skimming, Start Learning: How to Ensure Every Student Reads for Depth.” Also, we would love to hear your feedback about this guide, email us at info@activelylearn.com to share your thoughts!

Professional Learning Communities

Professional learning communities (PLCs) are an approach to professional development in which educators work collaboratively to learn about strategies to improve their craft and advance student learning. Typically, PLCs include small groups of educators who meet regularly to explore new concepts, share expertise and insights from their teaching experiences, and engage in collective problem solving. Unlike traditional professional development sessions, teacher inquiry and reflection are at the heart of effective PLCs. Throughout this process, educators build knowledge by identifying what they need to learn in order to promote valued student outcomes (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Effective learning communities also provide opportunities for frequent feedback and create a space for people to learn from each other and continually attempt to improve (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

Forming Professional Learning Communities

There are no set rules for forming PLCs. A PLC may include teachers from the same grade level or subject area, or include a teachers from multiple grade levels and subjects. PLCs can also consist of teachers from different schools within a district. The literacy practices described in this guide can be applied across content areas with the goal of supporting students as they read complex texts. In addition to classroom teachers, instructional coaches, mentor teachers, and other support staff can be included in these PLC sessions. If a participant does not teach a class of their own, at the end of each session when members are given time to prepare a lesson applying what they have learned, support personnel should consider collaborating with classroom teachers to plan and co-teach lessons. While there are no official size restraints on PLCs, it is important that the group size does not become so large that it prevents open discussion and reflection among all participants.

PLC Facilitators

Just as there are few rules for forming PLCs, there are no strict rules for choosing facilitators. School or district administrators can lead the sessions outlined in this guide as well as teacher leaders. Given that throughout the sessions members will be directed to create assignments on Actively Learn, ideally the facilitator will be familiar with Actively Learn, and have a strong literacy background and good communication skills. Some groups may decide to have the role of facilitator rotate among members of the PLC.
Five-Step Process for PLC Sessions

The sessions described in this facilitator’s guide use the five-step process for collaborative learning summarized in the table below (Exhibit 1). This process was adapted from Dimino, Taylor, and Morris’ (2015) inquiry-action cycle, which encourages educators to reflect on their current teaching practices, explore new strategies, and consider how to apply new strategies in their classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit 1: Overview of Five-Step Process for PLC Sessions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Debrief</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask team members to share instructional strategies and activities they implemented in their classrooms, and describe the impact these strategies had on student learning and engagement. Next, ask team members to describe any challenges they and/or students experienced and how they might adapt their instruction or practices to improve student learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define Session Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review key insights from the previous PLC session. State the focus and goals of the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access team members’ prior knowledge and experiences related to the topic of the session. Move into new learning by exploring Actively Learn’s Professional Learning Center and other resources. Compare current teaching practices with newly learned concepts. [Note: Some of the PLC modules are only available to users on premium plans.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborate with team members to practice applying strategies that were addressed in PL modules and/or readings (e.g., create sample assignments and peer teach, complete PL module practice activity, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect and Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guide team members in thinking about how the new learning relates to previous knowledge and practice. Then, provide time for team members to plan how to implement these strategies in their classrooms prior to the next PLC session. Encourage team members to set clear targets for student learning and remind them to be prepared to share their experiences implementing the new strategies during the next session.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conducting the PLC Sessions

This guide is intended to serve as a general game plan for facilitators as they conduct each session. The modules include suggested activities, discussion questions, and printable handouts. To gain the best results from this process, facilitators should review the relevant section and prepare materials prior to each session.

Timeline for Completing the Sessions

The timeline for completing the sessions is flexible. Ideally, the group will meet regularly (weekly, biweekly, etc.) to reflect on student outcomes following the previous session and learn new strategies. This guide presents a total of ten 75-90-minute sessions. All sessions in the guide can be taught sequentially or selected...
modules can be delivered in the order that best fits the group’s objectives. An individual module can also be used during a standalone professional development session.

Access to Technology

There is time allotted during each session for participants to apply new strategies by creating assignments on Actively Learn. As such, it is recommended that all members have access to internet-enabled devices. All members will also need to create accounts on Actively Learn.

References


Photo Credit (Cover): College of DuPage STEM Professional Development Workshop Teaches the Art of Escape Games, by COD Newsroom (2017). Used under Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic License: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en
Before the First Session

Prior to the first meeting, it is important to establish the purpose or define the need for initiating these PLC sessions. This purpose can be based on student achievement data, school improvement goals, or teacher-identified professional learning needs. Share the PLC’s purpose and the desired teacher and student learning outcomes with participants.

Additionally, PLC members should spend time prior to the first meeting setting up their account on Actively Learn and exploring the platform. Share this onboarding checklist and the following steps with participants who have not previously used Actively Learn to help them get started:

1. Create a teacher account on Actively Learn
2. Go through the “Getting Started Tour”
3. Check out the teacher and student overview videos
4. Explore the Catalog
5. Create an assignment and assign it to students

Session 1: Introductory Session

Define PLCs & Five-Step Process

PLCs vary in structure and how members go about working as a team. Prior to launching a PLC it is helpful to set expectations and to ensure that all members have a clear understanding of the group’s goals and what their participation will look like. Adapt the discussion described below based on the previous experience members of your team have had participating in PLCs.

1. Lead a discussion of the following with the whole group:
   - Overall goal(s) of the PLC
   - Roles and responsibilities of team members (e.g., facilitator, timekeeper, notetaker, etc.) and whether these roles will change each session
   - Ground rules (e.g., discussion guidelines, punctuality, etc.)
   - Time allocated for each session and schedule

2. Explain the five-step process that will be used during the PLC sessions.
   - Debrief -- Share the strategies you implemented following the last session and explain how students responded
   - Define Session Goals -- Discuss the focus and goals of the session
   - Explore New Practices and Compare Them to Current Practices -- Learn about specific actions and instructional strategies related to session’s topic
   - Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies -- Practice applying strategies on Actively Learn
   - Reflect and Plan -- Plan for implementing new strategies in your classroom

Explore Challenges to Reading for Depth

This PLC facilitator’s guide focuses on using Actively Learn to implement practices to activate, support, and reveal student learning. Prior to engaging in the subsequent sessions, team members should have some familiarity with Actively Learn’s platform and how it supports deeper learning. If your group is already familiar with Actively Learn, consider skipping the following activity.

1. Download the “Intro to Actively Learn” slide deck. Present the slides and discuss the challenges related to reading for depth.
2. After sharing the slides, discuss the following:
   - Which of the the practices listed in the A-S-R framework do you think would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?
   - Which practices are you most interested in learning more about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Reading on Actively Learn</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The next activity gives members an opportunity to experience reading on Actively Learn as a student. Prior to this activity you and all team members will need to <a href="#">create Actively Learn accounts</a>. Then, <a href="#">create a class</a> for members to <a href="#">join using a class code</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Assign members “<a href="#">Reading for Depth</a>” in Actively Learn. <a href="#">Note: You will need to set up a class for the PLC group to assign the reading. Members can access the assignment by switching to “Student Mode.”</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. After reading, ask members to share their experience as a student using Actively Learn. Discuss how using Actively Learn can address some of the challenges to reading for depth discussed earlier.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect and Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Small groups: Ask members to brainstorm how and when they might use Actively Learn in their classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduce the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 1.1) and guide members to reflect on how they might use Actively Learn in their classrooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. [If time] Provide time for members to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom. Members can <a href="#">upload assignments</a> to the Workspace from the Catalog or import their own content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Encourage members to try teaching a lesson on Actively Learn prior to the next PLC session and be prepared to share their experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Handout 1.1 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

*Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.*

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom.

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2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activate student thinking</th>
<th>Support student thinking</th>
<th>Reveal student thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Ask higher-order questions</td>
<td>☐ Build background knowledge</td>
<td>☐ Use formative assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Encourage strategic annotation</td>
<td>☐ Scaffold challenging texts</td>
<td>☐ Provide effective feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Facilitate discussion</td>
<td>☐ Build vocabulary</td>
<td>☐ Promote writing extensively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Model close reading</td>
<td>☐ Improve accessibility for reading challenges</td>
<td>☐ Cultivate metacognition</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Other: __________________________</td>
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</table>

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

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Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

*When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.*

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

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5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

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6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

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**Session 2: Activate Thinking - Questioning & Discussion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Debrief</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinarily, team members will begin each session by sharing their experiences implementing the instructional approaches learned during the previous session. As this is the first session focused on specific practices, this step can be skipped or used to discuss team members’ experiences using Actively Learn in their classrooms following the introductory session.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Pairs:** Ask team members to discuss what went well during their initial uses of Actively Learn and the challenges they experienced.
2. **Whole Group:** Create a 2-column chart labeled “Teacher” and “Student.” Lead a discussion of the following:
   - What did you notice for your students as they used Actively Learn for the first time?
   - What was your experience as a teacher like?
   - Based on these experiences, what are you interested in learning more about as you implement Actively Learn in your classroom?
3. Share how the upcoming cohort sessions will address some of the topics team members are interested in learning more about.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define Session Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Remind team members that during each meeting you will go through a five-step inquiry process to learn about specific practices to deepen students learning while using Actively Learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Debrief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Define Session Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflect and Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Explain that in this session the team will learn about how questioning and discussion can be used to activate student thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ask team members to share about what they hope to learn about these two practices.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access Prior Knowledge</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Read the following scenario to the team:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>A teacher assigned her students a reading about the Civil War. After reading, she asked the students to answer the following questions:</em> [Note: It may be helpful to display these questions.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>When did the Civil War start and when did it end?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>What were the key battles of the war?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Describe General Robert E. Lee.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <em>Which states joined the Confederacy? What were their reasons for seceding from the Union? Were the reasons the same for each Confederate state?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Small Groups:</strong> Ask groups to discuss what they notice about the questions the teacher asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Possible questions to discuss: What is the goal of these questions? What information will student responses provide the teacher? How might these questions affect students’ learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Whole Group:</strong> Ask team to share how they determine which questions to ask in an assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Read the next part of the scenario:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>After students complete the reading assignment, the teacher facilitates a whole-class discussion</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
about the social and political impact the Civil War. Very few students participate in the discussion, and when they do, their answers lack evidence and depth. The teacher is confused. Although, the reading covered this topic clearly, the students don’t seem to have ideas to share.

5. Ask the team to discuss the following:
   - What do you think is the cause of the challenges the teacher is noticing?
   - What would you do to promote discussion in this scenario?

Move into New Learning

6. Provide time for team members to review the “Asking Higher-Order Questions” and “Facilitate Discussion” slides in the Professional Learning Center on Actively Learn. As they are working through the modules, encourage team members to take note of one or two actions they would like to try in their classrooms.
   - Discuss: How are questioning and promoting discussion related?

7. Optional activity (if time): Ask teachers to select a practice they want to learn more about.
   - For members who want to learn more about questioning -- Assign How to Ask Great Questions in Actively Learn to team members and provide time for them to complete the reading. [Note: You will need to log in as a Teacher on Actively Learn and create a class that includes team members. The team can access the assignment by logging into their accounts and switching to “Student Mode.”]
   - For members who want to learn more about discussion -- Assign members the Socratic Seminar guide. Ask team members to review the guide and share ideas about how and when they can use Socratic Seminars and other discussion techniques in their classrooms.

Compare Current Practices

8. Lead a team discussion of the following:
   - What recommendations or information from the modules (and reading) stood out to you?
   - How are your teaching practices similar to or different from those described these resources?
   - In light of what you learned, are there any changes you might make to your instruction?

Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies

Two activities that allow team members to practice some of the newly learned strategies are described below. Depending on time and session objectives, you can select one or both activities. Team members can also be directed to choose an activity that best meets their interests and learning goals.

Activity 1: Peer Teaching (30 minutes)
   - Ask team members to create a reading assignment on Actively Learn implementing some of the practices they've learned about questioning and discussion.
   - Small Groups: Organize participants into groups of three or four. In each group, a team member assigns their reading to other members of the group and explains the strategy they were practicing. [Note: To assign the reading, each member will need to create a class that the other members can join using a class code. Then, members can view the assignment in “Student Mode.”]. Next, group members spend a few minutes completing the assignment, and provide feedback to the “peer teacher.” Groups repeat this process with another “peer teacher” until all members have a chance to share their assignment.

Activity 2: “Try” Activities in PL Center (10 minutes)
   - Ask team members to complete the “Try” activities for the Ask Higher-Order Questions and Facilitate Discussion modules on the PL Center.
   - Lead the team in a discussion of the following:
     - What did you find most challenging about asking higher-order questions?
     - What did you find most challenging about promoting discussion/collaboration?
**Reflect and Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about questioning and discussion?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to questioning and discussion (e.g., tying questions to an objective, building toward higher levels of complexity in questions, using notes to prompt student discussions while reading, etc.).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 2.1) or other lesson planning template.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 2.2) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Handout 2.1 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

*Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.*

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ____________________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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</table>

☐ Other: ____________________________________________

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

*When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.*

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ____________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

___________________________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 2.2 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: __________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): ______________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Other: ____________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
<td>______________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that went well</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you do differently next time?</th>
<th>What questions do you have? What else do you want to learn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Session 3: Activate Thinking - Student Annotation

Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members to debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 2 focusing on how asking higher-order questions and facilitating discussion helped activate student thinking and led to deeper learning. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 2:
   - Great questions are the starting point for robust discussion and critical thinking. The questioning PL module stresses the importance of tying questions to a clear objective that build toward higher levels of complexity.
   - The discussion module emphasizes that discussion is a key factor in motivating students to read and sharing ideas gives students a common sense of purpose that leads to deeper learning.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore how encouraging strategic student annotation can promote more engaged, critical reading.


Access Prior Knowledge

1. Small groups: Give each group copies of sample annotated texts (Handouts 3.1, 3.3, 3.3). Groups can discuss the following:
   - What do the annotations reveal about the student’s understanding?
   - Are all annotations created equal? (i.e., Do all lead to deeper learning or activate thinking?)
2. Whole group: Ask the whole-group to discuss what student annotations look like in their classrooms.

Move into New Learning

3. Explain to the team that they will be exploring how student annotation can be used to activate student thinking. Organize members into groups of 3-4. Direct each group to do the following:
   - Ask group members to review the “Encourage Strategic Annotation” PL module slides and read the Strategic Annotation: Thinking Like an Expert Reader blog post.
   - As members are reading, encourage them to take note of practices that they think would have an impact in their classroom.
   - After groups have finished reviewing resources, ask members to discuss recommendations from the resources that stood out to them.

Compare Current Practices

4. Whole group: Ask members from each group to share key insights from their resources and discuss the following:
   - How were the practices described in your resources similar or different from your current teaching practice?
   - What recommendations discussed do you believe would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?
Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies

This activity gives PLC members an opportunity to practice using notes and questions to encourage strategic annotations. Members will also practice using the “Co-Author” feature in Actively Learn. [Note: The ‘Co-Author’ feature is only available to users on premium plans.]

1. Reorganize members back into the same groups they were in during the prior activity. Each group should do the following:
   - One member imports the blog post they read earlier into their workspace and invites the other members of the group to co-author the assignment. [Note: Assignment should be shared with all members of the group and the facilitator.]
   - Each group creates teacher directions for the assignment sets a purpose for reading and directs students to use a specific annotation strategy. Then, each group member adds one question or note modeling or scaffolding the types of annotations they would like students to look for.
2. After the groups have finished creating their assignment, assign individual members the reading from a group they were not in. [Note: You will need to assign the reading in Actively Learn. Team members will need to enter “Student Mode” to access the assignment.] Allow members a few minutes to review and complete the other group’s assignment.
3. Whole group: Debrief by asking members to discuss how the notes and teacher in the assignments helped them create strategic annotations that deepened their understanding of the text.

Reflect and Plan

Reflect
1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about annotation?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to encouraging strategic annotations (e.g., focus on one strategy at a time when modeling, add instructions to direct students in creating annotations, etc.).
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

Plan
5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 3.4) or other lesson planning template.
6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.
7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 3.5) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.
THE EVOLUTION OF USEFUL THINGS

things that wouldn’t work as a springboard to new approaches.” He was quite explicit about the way an idea progressed from terrible-looking things to bottles displayed proudly in supermarkets: “If I hadn’t used those mistakes as stepping stones, I would never have invented anything.” Whatever one may think of the plastic bottle, the thing does fulfill the objective of replacing glass bottles. That Wyeth’s achievement now presents environmental problems for other inventors to solve should come as no surprise in an imperfect world of imperfect things.

Regardless of their background and motivation, all inventors appear to share the quality of being driven by the real or perceived failure of existing things or processes to work as well as they might. Fault-finding with the made world around them and disappointment with the inefficiency with which things are done appear to be common traits among inventors and engineers generally. They revel in problems—those they themselves identify in the everyday things they use, or those they work on for corporations, clients, and friends. Inventors are not satisfied with things as they are; inventors are constantly dreaming of how things might be better.

This is not to say that inventors are pessimists. On the contrary, they are supreme optimists, for they pursue innovation with the belief that they can improve the world, or at least the things of the world. Inventors do not believe in leaving well enough alone, for well enough is not good enough for them. But, also being supreme pragmatists, they realize that they must recognize limits to improvement and the trade-offs that must accompany it. Credible inventors know the limitations of the world too, including its thermodynamic laws of conservation of energy and growth of entropy. They do not seek perpetual-motion machines or fountains of youth but, rather, strive to do the best with what they have and for the best they know they can have, and they always recognize that they can never have everything.

Marvin Camras, a native Chicagoan who was educated at the Illinois Institute of Technology and spent most of his career at its affiliated research institute, holds over five hundred patents for devices in electrical communications. When once asked if he noticed whether inventors had any common traits, he responded:

They tend to be dissatisfied with what they see around them. Maybe they’re dissatisfied with something they’re actually
Digging

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; as snug as a gun.

Under my window a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked

Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade,
Just like his old man.

My grandfather could cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away

Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, digging down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mold, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curl cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.

But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Seamus Heaney
Lost Highway
Bon Jovi

In my rearview mirror
Midlife is getting clearer
The stoplights and town disappear
These trinkets once were treasure
Life changes like the weather
You show up, grow old or hit the road; round here
So I drive, watching white lines passing by
With my plastic dashboard Jesus, waiting there to greet us

Hey, hey, I finally found my way
Say goodbye to yesterday
Hit the gas, there ain't no brakes on the lost highway
Yeah, I'm bustin' loose, I'm letting go
Out on this open road
It's independence day on this lost highway

I don't know where I'm going
But I know where I've been
Now I'm afraid of going back again
So I drive, years and miles are flying by
And waiting here to greet us
Is my plastic dashboard Jesus

Oh patron saint of lonely souls
To tell this boy which way to go
Guide the car, you got the keys
Farewell to mediocrity
Kicking off the cruise-control
And turning up the radio
Get just enough religion
And a full tank of gas come on, let's go

I finally found my way
Say goodbye to yesterday
Hit the gas, there ain't no brakes on the lost highway
Yeah, I'm bustin' loose, I'm letting go
Out on this open road
It's independence day on this lost highway

Mediocrity - a man who is average, unexciting, never
Say goodbye to the excitement of the average middle
He wants something more extreme

Connection blur? time is driving towards

What is the importance of this phrase?

Handout 3.4 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ____________________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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<td>☐ Improve accessibility for reading challenges</td>
<td>☐ Cultivate metacognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ Other: ____________________________________________

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ____________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 3.5 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: ____________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): __________________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

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<tr>
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□ Other: ________________________________

4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that went well</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
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</table>

6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

What would you do differently next time? What questions do you have? What else do you want to learn?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
### Session 4: Activate Thinking - Modeling Close Reading

#### Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members to debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 3 focusing on how encouraging strategic annotations helped activate student thinking and led to deeper learning. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

#### Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 3:
   - Annotation promotes active reading and encourages students to self-monitor while reading.
   - Students must be explicitly taught and guided in making strategic annotations that are thoughtful and useful to their learning.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore how modeling close reading skills in Actively Learn can also promote more engaged, critical reading.


**Access Prior Knowledge**

1. Ask members to take a minute or two to jot down their individual perceptions of expert or close reading. (Prompts: What does close reading look like? What do you expect an expert reader to do?)
2. Small groups: In small groups, have members share their their responses to the previous prompt and describe their current instructional practices for teaching close reading.
3. Whole group: Lead a whole-group discussion of the following:
   - To what extent are the practices you’ve used to teach close reading been effective in building independent skills in students?
   - What challenges are you currently facing when it comes to teaching close reading?

**Move into New Learning**

4. Explain to members that they will be learning about the importance of modeling and explicitly teaching close reading strategies. Organize members into groups of 3 or 4 based on grade-level or subject-area taught. Direct each group to do the following:
   - Ask group members to review the “Model Close Reading” PL module slides and read the [Modeling Expert Reading: Three Tips for Success blog post](#).
   - As members are reading, encourage them to take note of practices that they think would have an impact in their classroom.
   - After groups have finished reviewing resources, ask members to discuss what it might look like to implement some of the recommendations described in their classrooms (considering the grade level or subject-area taught).

**Compare Current Practices**

5. Whole group: Ask members from each group to share key insights from their resources and discuss the following:
   - How were the practices described in your resources similar to or different from your current teaching practice?
- What recommendations discussed do you believe would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?

### Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies

This activity gives PLC members an opportunity to practice using notes and questions to model close reading practices. Members will also practice using the “co-author” feature in Actively Learn. [Note: The ‘Co-Author” feature is only available to users on premium plans.]

1. Reorganize members back into the same groups they were in during the prior activity. Each group should do the following:
   - Select a text from the catalog and add it to one member’s workspace. Next, the member with the text in their workspace should invite the other members of the group to **co-author the assignment**. [Note: Assignment should be shared with all members of the group and the facilitator.]
   - Each group creates teacher directions that describe the close reading strategy they will focus on in the assignment. Then, each group member adds one question or note in the text modeling this strategy.
2. After groups have finished creating their assignment, assign individual members the reading from a group they were not in. [Note: You will need to assign the reading in Actively Learn. Team members will need to enter “Student Mode” to access the assignment.] Allow members a few minutes to review and complete the other group’s assignment.
3. Whole group: Debrief by asking members to discuss how the notes and teacher directions in the assignments helped them to understand and apply the focus strategy.

### Reflect and Plan

**Reflect**

1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about modeling?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to modeling close reading.
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

**Plan**

5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 4.1) or other lesson planning template.
6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.
7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 4.2) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.
Handout 4.1 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

*Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.*

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ________________________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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□ Other: ________________________________________________

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

*When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.*

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 4.2 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: ____________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): ________________________________________________________________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

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4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

__________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

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6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

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## Session 5: Support Thinking - Content Knowledge

### Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 4 focusing on how modeling close reading helped activate student thinking and led to deeper learning. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

### Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 4:
   - Modeling is an effective way to make the reading process more transparent to students.
   - When modeling, focus on one strategy at a time and demonstrate how you are applying it to make sense of the text.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore how building background or content knowledge enables students to access and more deeply understand a text.

### Explore New Practices and Compare Them to Current Practices

**Access Prior Knowledge**

1. Explain to members that in every text we read, the author makes assumptions about what the reader does and does not know.
2. Display the [photo](#) from the National Anti-Suffrage Association Headquarters (Handout 5.1), and discuss the following:
   - What is happening in this photo?
   - What do you need to know to fully understand the scene depicted?
3. Discuss how failing to fully understand the photo is similar to reading a written text with insufficient background knowledge. With reading, a student might be able to pronounce the words without error, read fluently, and even answer surface level questions about the text, but the full meaning eludes them without critical background or content knowledge.
4. Small groups: Ask members to discuss how they typically help students build background knowledge.

**Move into New Learning**

5. Assign members “The Content Comeback: Why Knowledge Matters to Thinking and Learning” in Actively Learn. [Note: You will need to set up a class for the PLC group to assign the reading. Members can access the assignment by switching to “Student Mode.”]
6. After members finish the reading, ask members to share how they have seen gaps in background/content knowledge impact their students’ learning.
7. Display the “Build Background Knowledge” slides from the PL module. The first several slides review some of the key ideas from the reading assignment members just completed. Quickly move through these and spend more time discussing the actions described in the final 10 slides.

**Compare Current Practices**

8. Small groups: In small groups, ask members to discuss the following:
   - Which of these actions seem like they would be the most beneficial to your students?
• What changes in your instruction or unit planning would implementing these strategies require?
• Are there other strategies for building background knowledge that you’ve used that have been effective for your students?

**Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies**

1. Explain that two key strategies for building background knowledge involve 1) embedding images, videos, and notes that provide knowledge to students while they are reading, and 2) sequencing instruction or texts to build knowledge (e.g., text sets). Ask members to determine which of these approaches they would like to practice and organize themselves into groups of 3 or 4 based on their selected approach.

For groups focusing on sharing knowledge that students can access while reading, direct members to do the following:
• Select a text from the catalog and add it to one member’s workspace. Next, the member with the text in their workspace should invite the other members of the group to co-author the assignment.
• Group members identify portions of the text that their students would likely not understand because of a lack of content knowledge and discuss what they would need to know.
• Members collaboratively write teacher directions to introduce the text and frontload important content knowledge.
• Each member adds one or two notes that include necessary background knowledge and/or media to support students in understanding the text.

For groups focusing on sequencing texts, direct members to do the following:
• Direct members to review the Tips for Creating Text Sets.
• Ask members to select a core text that they often teach in their classrooms. Find this text in the Catalog or if it’s available electronically, one member should upload it to their workspace and invite the other members of the group to co-author the assignment.
• Discuss the critical background knowledge that students need in order to fully understand the core text. Members identify one or two other texts that they might assign prior to reading the core text to provide background knowledge and add them to their workspace.
• Then, members collaboratively write teacher directions for each of the supplemental texts that set a purpose for reading and explain how the text relates to the core text.

2. After groups have completed their assignments, discuss the following:
• What did you find difficult about building background knowledge?
• How might you use the approach you practiced in your classroom?

**Reflect and Plan**

**Reflect**

1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about building background knowledge?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to building students’ background or content knowledge.
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?
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</table>
Handout 5.1 - National Anti-Suffrage Association Headquarters Photo

Source: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division LC-USZ62-25338 DLC
Handout 5.2 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ____________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

_______________________________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 5.3 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: ___________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): __________________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

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</table>

☐ Other: __________________________________________________________

4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

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6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

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<tr>
<th>What would you do differently next time?</th>
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Session 6: Support Thinking - Scaffolding

Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members to debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 5 focusing on building background/content knowledge. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 5:
   - Background knowledge is a critical part of reading comprehension. It’s important to use intentional strategies to build students’ content knowledge.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore how scaffolding strategies can be used to make complex texts more accessible to all students.


Access Prior Knowledge

1. Small groups: Have team members, working in small groups of two or three, discuss the following:
   - What are some examples of complex texts that you use in your classroom?
   - What challenges have you noticed when students are reading these texts?
   - How have you tried to address these challenges?
2. Whole group: Ask each small group to share out one challenge they discussed and one way they have tried to support students while reading complex texts.

Move into New Learning

3. Explain to members that they will spend some time exploring different resources to learn ways that scaffolding can be used to make challenging texts more accessible to students. Members will participate in the Jigsaw reading activity described below.

   Step 1: “Expert” group discussions
   - Organize members into groups of three or four. Assign each group one of the following resources (printed or electronically):
     - “Scaffold Challenging Texts” PL module slides
     - 4 Questions that Drive Successful Scaffolds
     - How to Scaffold Texts for Struggling Readers in Actively Learn
   - After each group has reviewed their resource, ask them to discuss the ideas that stood out to them and how the strategies for scaffolding described might benefit their students.

   Step 2: “Experts” share ideas with new groups
   - Reorganize members into new groups, so that each new group includes at least one person from each “expert” group.
   - In their new groups, have members share insights from their previous discussion focusing on strategies for scaffolding. On a large sheet of paper, ask each group to list ideas for scaffolding challenging texts and include examples.
Compare Current Practices

4. Whole group: Display each group’s list of scaffolding ideas and discuss how these strategies might address the challenges students experience when reading complex texts that the group shared earlier.

5. Ask team members to discuss the following questions:
   - How are these scaffolding strategies similar to or different from your current teaching practice?
   - What recommendations discussed do you believe would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?

**Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies**

Two activities that allow team members to practice some of the newly learned strategies are described below. Depending on time and session objectives, you can select one or both activities. Team members can also be directed to chose an activity that best meets their interests and learning goals.

**Activity 1: “Try” Activity in PL Center (10 minutes)**

- Ask team members to complete the “Try” activity for the “Scaffold Challenging Texts” module in the PL Center.
- Lead the team in a discussion of the following:
  - What did you find most challenging about scaffolding texts?
  - What is one scaffolding strategy that you would like to try in your classroom?
  - What questions do you still have about using Actively Learn to scaffold texts?

**Activity 2: Peer Teaching (30 minutes)**

- Ask team members to create a reading assignment on Actively Learn implementing some of the practices they’ve learned about scaffolding.
- Small Groups: Organize team into groups of three or four. In each group, a team member assigns their reading to other members of the group. [Note: To assign the reading, each member will need to create a class that the other members can join using a class code. Then, members can view the assignment in “Student Mode”]. Next, group members spend a few minutes completing the assignment, and then provide feedback to the “peer teacher.” Groups repeat this process with another “peer teacher” until all members have a chance to share their assignment.

**Reflect and Plan**

**Reflect**

1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about scaffolding challenging texts?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to scaffolding.
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

**Plan**

5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 6.1) or other lesson planning template.
6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.
7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 6.2) and remind team members to be prepared to share their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.
Handout 6.1 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

____________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ________________________________

____________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

____________________________________

____________________________________

____________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

____________________________________

____________________________________
Handout 6.2 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: __________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): ________________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

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4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

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5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

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Session 7: Support Thinking - Building Vocabulary

Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 6 focusing on scaffolding complex texts. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 6:
   - Effective scaffolds help students access complex texts and more deeply engage in the content.
   - The goal of scaffolding is to get student to read on their own without support, and it’s important to consider how scaffolds can be gradually reduced over time.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore practices for teaching vocabulary that enable deep understanding and transfer.


Access Prior Knowledge

1. Write the questions listed below on three large sheets of chart paper (one question per sheet).
   - What is the purpose or goal of vocabulary instruction?
   - How do you currently teach vocabulary in your class?
   - What is challenging about building students’ vocabulary?
2. Small groups: Organize members into three groups, and give each group one of the sheets of paper. Ask members to discuss the question and write down their ideas. After a few minutes, rotate the papers so that each group gets a new question. Repeat until each group has responded to all of the questions.
3. Whole group: Display all three sheets of paper and lead a whole-group discussion of the challenges and benefits of vocabulary instruction.

Move into New Learning

A key step in building students’ vocabulary is identifying which words to teach. The subsequent resources and activities in this section will focus primarily on helping teachers determine the high-impact words to teach students and will offer recommendations for how to embed this instruction into classroom routines.

4. Distribute copies of “Identifying Vocabulary Words to Teach” (Handout 7.1) and allow members several minutes to read the excerpt. Encourage members to take note of the different types of words students might encounter in a text.
5. Small groups: Divide members into groups of 2 or 3 and ask them to complete the “Which Words Do I Teach?” practice activity (Handout 7.2). [Note: It will be helpful for members to have different colored highlighters/markers for this task.] Groups should identify Tier 2 and Tier 3 words in the passages and discuss which words might be most challenging for their students to learn.

Compare Current Practices

6. Whole group: Ask team members to discuss the following questions:
What was challenging about identifying Tier 2 and Tier 3 words?
What are some strategies that you could use in your classroom to help students learn the words you identified? [Note: Record a list of brainstorming ideas, and display them for later reference.]

Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies

Now that members have practiced identifying key vocabulary terms in a text, the next activity will focus on strategies for teaching vocabulary while using Actively Learn.

1. Display the “Build Vocabulary” slides from the PL module. The first several slides review some of the key ideas from the reading assignment members just completed. Quickly move through these and spend more time discussing the actions described in the final 10 slides. Brainstorm additional ideas for how to build students’ vocabulary as they read texts in Actively Learn.

2. Ask members to do the following:
   - Add a text from Actively Learn’s Catalog that you might use in your class to your Workspace.
   - Identify a few Tier 1 or 2 words in the text.
   - Add instruction (notes or questions) that will help students understand each word’s meaning and/or prompt students to practice using the word in their own responses.

3. After about ten minutes, invite a couple members to share their assignments with the whole group. As a whole group, discuss the strategies that members used to build vocabulary and offer feedback.

Reflect and Plan

Reflect

1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about building vocabulary?

2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to vocabulary development.

3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.

4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

Plan

5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 7.3) or other lesson planning template.

6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.

7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 7.4) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.
Handout 7.1- Identifying Vocabulary Words to Teach


Excerpt

While many factors influence the complexity of a text, research indicates that vocabulary is very likely the number one most important (Nelson et al 2012, Perfetti 2007, NCES 2012). Consequently, the [Common Core State Standards] CCSS place special emphasis on vocabulary. The CCSS acknowledge the relationship between engaging with complex text and vocabulary acquisition: an 8th grader might expand his vocabulary somewhat from reading a 5th grade text, but more growth would likely occur with texts written at an 8th grade level. Meeting the levels of text complexity required by the CCSS demands significant attention to vocabulary acquisition. Likewise, vocabulary acquisition is aided by students engaging regularly with complex, grade-level text in addition to engaging in a volume of reading of texts they can read independently. In this way, the different standards work together towards the goal of college-and-career readiness for all students.

Instructional Implications

So how do we teach the volume of words necessary for students to read grade-level text independently and proficiently?

The true challenge comes in choosing exactly which words to teach, how to teach them, and how long to spend on them. Hiebert (2009) describes three general criteria for determining which words to choose for intensive teaching:

1) words needed to fully comprehend the text,
2) words likely to appear in future texts from any discipline, and
3) words that are part of a word family or semantic network.

These criteria serve as useful guideposts, but truly knowing when to stop and teach in context, when to prepare students in advance, and when to teach words more intensively, is challenging for even the most seasoned educators. In preparing a text for instruction, teachers frequently find themselves asking, “Which words do I teach, and how much time do I give to them?”

Words that can be quickly explained should be explained in the moment of encounter. This often includes:

1) concrete words,
2) words with single meanings, and
3) words reflecting meaning or shades of meaning that are likely already part of the students’ experiences.

The explanation will enhance and not impede comprehension because it will be swift and unobtrusive (Biemiller 2010).

Words that need more explanation will ideally be taught in context, and then reinforced after, as these explanations will be more elaborate and time-consuming (Beck, McKeown and Kucan 2007, Biemiller 2007). This includes:

1) words that are abstract,
2) words with multiple related meanings, and
3) words reflecting meanings or shades of meaning that are likely not part of the students’ experiences.

Understanding how words are classified into tiers can help educators plan effective vocabulary instruction. Text can be broken down into three tiers of words (Beck and McKeown 2002), each with its own implications for instruction:
Tier one words are the words of everyday speech usually learned in the early grades or at home, though not at the same rate by all children (Biemiller 2007). These words are extremely important to early learning since teachers tend to use these very words to define more unusual words. Because they are learned largely through conversation, and are not often considered challenging beyond the early grades, students who don’t in fact know them can easily be left behind. Biemiller’s work shows that though many students learn these words in the elementary years, lower income students tend to learn them later. This delays these students’ vocabulary growth and makes catching up to their more affluent peers extremely difficult if teachers are not alert to this phenomenon.

Tier two words are “words that characterize written and especially academic text—but are not so common in everyday conversation” (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan 2008). Tier two words appear in all sorts of texts: academic texts (*relative, vary, formulate, specify, accumulate*), technical writing (*calibrate, itemize, structure*), and literary texts (*misfortune, dignified, faltered, unabashedly*). Tier two words are far more likely to appear in writing than in speech. The Standards refer to tier two words as academic vocabulary.

These words require particular instructional attention. They are often vital to comprehension, will reappear in many texts, and are frequently part of word families or semantic networks. The challenge to teachers is to be alert to the presence of tier two words, determine which ones need to be taught, and which words deserve more time and attention for richer understanding. Tier two words can carry disproportionate weight in conveying the meaning of a text, and a reader who doesn’t understand even a single such weighty word might have his or her comprehension thrown off track. This is equally true of informational and literary texts. It is for these reasons that the Common Core State Standards for ELA / Literacy demand significant instructional attention to these words.

Instruction of tier two words might begin with careful examination of the key role these words play in the text, followed by examining the variety and shades of meaning each of these words possesses. This, in turn, would be followed by careful attention to the spelling and pronunciation, as well as any prefixes, suffixes and roots, i.e. the morphology or structure of the word. This focus on precise meanings in varied contexts combined with morphology will also provide some of the repetitions necessary for learning the word. Encounters with a word spread out over time will further increase the likelihood of retention.

Tier three words are far more common in informational passages than in literature. They are specific to a domain or field of study (*java, fuel injection, legislature, circumference, aorta*) and key to understanding a new concept within the text. Because of their specificity, tier three words are often explicitly defined by the text and repeatedly used. Thus, the author takes care to have the text itself provide much support in the learning of tier three words. In addition, as they are the words that contain the ideas necessary to a new topic, teachers often define and reinforce tier three words prior to and after students encounter them in a text. Therefore, students’ acquisition of tier three words is generally taken good care of by teachers as they know that the student has likely not encountered these terms before.

References


Handout 7.2 - Practice Identifying Vocabulary for Instruction

Which Words Do I Teach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read</th>
<th>the two passages for this grade band below (one text is informational and one is literary.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highlight</td>
<td>Tier 2 words you’d teach for this passage in yellow. Remember, Tier 2 words are terms that are more likely to appear across many different types of texts — academic vocabulary, such as relative or vary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlight</td>
<td>Tier 3 words you’d teach for this passage in blue. These are domain-specific words (i.e., words that are specific to this content area or type of text).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note</td>
<td>at the bottom of the page which words would require more time and attention versus less time and attention for students to learn and reasons why. (Questions to consider: Is the word abstract or concrete? Does it have multiple meanings? Is it part of a word family?)</td>
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Passage 1 – Informational:

Excerpt from the Introduction: “Why They Walked”
Not so long ago in Montgomery, Alabama, the color of your skin determined where you could sit on a public bus. If you happened to be an African American, you had to sit in the back of the bus, even if there were empty seats up front.

Back then, racial segregation was the rule throughout the American South. Strict laws—called “Jim Crow” laws—enforced a system of white supremacy that discriminated against blacks and kept them in their place as second-class citizens.

People were separated by race from the moment they were born in segregated hospitals until the day they were buried in segregated cemeteries. Blacks and whites did not attend the same schools, worship in the same churches, eat in the same restaurants, sleep in the same hotels, drink from the same water fountains, or sit together in the same movie theaters.
In Montgomery, it was against the law for a white person and a Negro to play checkers on public property or ride together in a taxi.

Most southern blacks were denied their right to vote. The biggest obstacle was the poll tax, a special tax that was required of all voters but was too costly for many blacks and for poor whites as well. Voters also had to pass a literacy test to prove that they could read, write, and understand the U.S. Constitution. These tests were often rigged to disqualify even highly educated blacks. Those who overcame the obstacles and insisted on registering as voters faced threats, harassment and even physical violence. As a result, African Americans in the South could not express their grievances in the voting booth, which for the most part, was closed to them. But there were other ways to protest, and one day a half century ago, the black citizens in Montgomery rose up in protest and united to demand their rights—by walking peacefully.

It all started on a bus.
Passage 2 – Literary:

Excerpt
Long ago and far away in the Land of the Rising Sun, there lived together a pair of mandarin ducks. Now, the drake was a magnificent bird with plumage of colors so rich that the emperor himself would have envied it. But his mate, the duck, wore the quiet tones of the wood, blending exactly with the hole in the tree where the two had made their nest.

One day while the duck was sitting on her eggs, the drake flew down to a nearby pond to search for food. While he was there, a hunting party entered the woods. The hunters were led by the lord of the district, a proud and cruel man who believed that everything in the district belonged to him to do with as he chose. The lord was always looking for beautiful things to adorn his manor house and garden. And when he saw the drake swimming gracefully on the surface of the pond, he determined to capture him.

The lord’s chief steward, a man named Shozo, tried to discourage his master. “The drake is a wild spirit, my lord,” he said. “Surely he will die in captivity.” But the lord pretended not to hear Shozo. Secretly he despised Shozo, because although Shozo had once been his mightiest samurai, the warrior had lost an eye in battle and was no longer handsome to look upon. The lord ordered his servants to clear a narrow way through the undergrowth and place acorns along the path. When the drake came out of the water he saw the acorns. How pleased he was! He forgot to be cautious, thinking only of what a feast they would be to take home to his mate. Just as he was bending to pick up an acorn in his scarlet beak, a net fell over him, and the frightened bird was carried back to the lord’s manor and placed in a small bamboo cage.

Review the words you highlighted. Which words do you think would require the most attention and time for students to learn and which do you think would be less challenging?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words that would require more time and attention</th>
<th>Words that would require less time and attention</th>
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Handout 7.3 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. _______________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected? _______________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? _______________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine. _______________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them? _______________________________________

Handout 7.4 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: __________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): _______________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

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4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

__________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

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6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

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# Session 8: Reveal Thinking - Formative Assessment

## Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members to debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 7 focusing on building vocabulary. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

## Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 7:
   - Vocabulary is a key factor that influences a text’s complexity. Unfamiliar vocabulary terms can become barriers to students while reading and prevent them from understanding content.
   - To support retention, it’s important to encourage students to put new words into practice.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore how formative assessments can be used to inform instruction and learning.

## Explore New Practices and Compare Them to Current Practices

### Access Prior Knowledge

1. Write the following question on a board or large sheet of paper: *How can a test be a gift?*
   - Pairs: Ask members to share their thoughts on the prompt considering both a teacher and student’s perspective.
   - Whole group: Invite members to share the ideas they discussed and list them on the board.
2. Discuss the following questions with the entire group:
   - How/when do you typically use tests in your classroom?
   - How do your students typically respond when given tests? How do they respond when tests are returned?
   - How do you typically use information from tests?

### Move into New Learning

3. Divide members into two groups and assign members of each group one of the following readings from Actively Learn’s Catalog: [Note: You will need to set up a class for the PLC to assign the reading. Members can access the assignment by switching to “Student Mode.”]
   - Formative Assessment: Tracking Student Learning in Real Time
   - Data-Driven Instruction: Using Insights into Student Habits to Improve Teacher Practice
4. After members finish their reading, ask them to discuss key takeaways with other group members. Give each group two large pieces of paper with the headings listed below and ask them to record their responses to the questions based on their discussion and reading.
   - Why is formative assessment/data-driven instruction important?
   - How can we do this in our classrooms?
5. Invite members from each group to share the takeaways from their readings with the rest of the group.

### Compare Current Practices

6. Whole group: Refer back to the question posed earlier in the session (“How can a test be a gift?”) and add new ideas to this list based on the resources members explored.
7. Ask team members to discuss the following questions:
   - How are these formative assessment strategies similar to or different from your current teaching practice?
   - What recommendations discussed do you believe would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies</th>
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For the next activity, members will have the chance to review sample data reports from an assignment in Actively Learn. As they review the data, encourage them to consider how this data might inform their instruction if they were the teacher of this class.

1. Small groups: Distribute copies of the Formative Assessment Practice Activity (Handout 8.1) and ask groups to review the data. Members should discuss what the data does and does not tell them and brainstorm next steps for the teacher of this class.
2. Whole group: With the whole group, discuss what stood out to them in the data and what it reveals about student learning and teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect and Plan</th>
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</table>
Reflect
1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about formative assessment and using data to inform instruction?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to formative assessment.
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

Plan
5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 8.2) or other lesson planning template.
6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.
7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 8.3) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.
Handout 8.1 - Formative Assessment Practice Activity

Directions: One of the most challenging aspects about formative assessment is deciding how to use the data to guide your instruction.

In this activity, you will have the chance to review sample data from a 9th grade class that read the Declaration of Independence on Actively Learn. Imagine that you are the teacher of this class and are reviewing this data. What will be your next steps?

Part I: The tables below include data from all students in the class. The Questions Table indicates the score that students received on individual questions.

### STUDENT OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes / Note Replies</th>
<th>Vocab Lookups</th>
<th>Flags</th>
<th>Question Progress (4 Total)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Average</td>
<td>1h 39m</td>
<td>16 / 0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searis, N</td>
<td>6m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musse, R</td>
<td>15m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4 / 0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collins, B</td>
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<td>37 / 0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruz, P</td>
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<td>13 / 0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>McCormick, R</td>
<td>2h 7m</td>
<td>32 / 0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bowman, A</td>
<td>1h 54m</td>
<td>49 / 0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Austin, K</td>
<td>2h 4m</td>
<td>15 / 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mack, T</td>
<td>2h 0m</td>
<td>9 / 0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medina, D</td>
<td>2h 19m</td>
<td>8 / 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton, K</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambert, J</td>
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<td>26 / 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little, E</td>
<td>2h 0m</td>
<td>5 / 0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Griffin, R</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guerrero, G</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball, S</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson, J</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennings, M</td>
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### QUESTIONS

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<th>Advanced</th>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Part II: A question from the assignment and individual student responses are displayed below.

**QUESTION 3  STANDARD RI.8  2x**

*Do the Colonies make a valid argument for declaring independence? What does he do in the text to support his argument?*

**LITTLE, EMILIO  06/08/17 4:34 PM**

Yes, the colonies do make valid arguments for declaring independence. In paragraphs 5-31 of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson and the other congress members describe all of the ways the British King has done them wrong such as, how the king cut off trade for the colonies with any other part of the world.

**GUERRERO, GRADY  06/08/17 4:34 PM**

They list all of the problems there are with the king's reign over the colonies and how his problem-solving has been weak at best.

**CRUZ, PEDRO  06/08/17 4:34 PM**

The colonies make an excellent argument as they provide support for each of the things they list as problems in the government. For example, he says even while they have held peaceful protests, the King, or rather tyrant has answered their protests with violence. Also to support his argument he uses specific times where the king has been abusive and even says that the king sends guards (who are supposed to be protecting the citizens) to basically just take over homes of the civilians and eat all of their food (Paragraph 14).
Handout 8.2 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activate student thinking</th>
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<th>Reveal student thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>□ Model close reading</td>
<td>□ Improve accessibility for reading challenges</td>
<td>□ Cultivate metacognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ Other: ____________________________________________

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

________________________________________________________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 8.3 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: ____________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): ___________________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

<table>
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<td>□ Improve accessibility</td>
<td>□ Cultivate metacognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ Other: ____________________________________________________________

4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)
__________________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

<table>
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<th>Challenges</th>
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</table>

6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

What would you do differently next time?  What questions do you have? What else do you want to learn?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you do differently next time?</th>
<th>What questions do you have? What else do you want to learn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# Session 9: Reveal Thinking - Feedback

## Debrief

1. Pairs: Ask team members to debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 8 focusing on formative assessment. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

## Define Session Goals

1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 8:
   - Formative assessment recognizes the complexity of teaching and learning; it ensures that material is being communicated and understood effectively.
   - Formative assessment is a powerful tool for improving teaching practice because it gives valuable data about what students did and did not learn.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore how feedback can be used to promote student learning.

## Explore New Practices and Compare Them to Current Practices

### Access Prior Knowledge

1. Post two large sheets of chart paper with the headings “Effective Feedback” and “Ineffective Feedback”
2. Ask group members to think of a time someone gave them positive or negative feedback and consider whether this feedback was effective.
3. Pairs: Have group members discuss elements of effective and ineffective feedback and write their ideas on sticky notes. After a few minutes, invite members to add their sticky notes to the appropriate sheets of chart paper.
4. Whole group: Lead the group in a discussion of the following:
   - What are some common features of effective feedback?
   - What makes giving and receiving feedback difficult?

### Move into New Learning

5. Assign members “Effective Feedback for Deeper Learning” from Actively Learn’s Catalog. [Note: You will need to set up a class for the PLC to assign the reading. Members can access the assignment by switching to “Student Mode.”]
6. After members finish reading, ask them to discuss key takeaways and continue adding ideas to the “Effective Feedback” chart.

### Compare Current Practices

7. Ask team members to discuss the following questions:
   - How are these feedback strategies discussed in the reading similar to or different from your current practice?
   - What recommendations discussed do you believe would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?
### Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies

During the peer teaching activity described below, members will have the chance to create or modify assignments in Actively Learn and practice giving each other feedback.

1. Organize members into groups of 3 or 4, and direct each person to do the following:
   - Select a text with a pre-created assignment from Actively Learn’s Catalog and add it to your workspace. [Note: Members can also use an assignment that they have already created in Actively Learn.]
   - Modify the questions or notes in the assignment if necessary.
2. In each group, one team member assigns their reading to other members of the group. [Note: To assign the reading, each member will need to create a class that the other members can join using a class code. Then, members can view the assignment in “Student Mode”].
   - Group members spend a few minutes completing the assignment, while the “peer teacher” practices giving feedback to the “students” based on their responses in the assignment.
   - Groups repeat this process with another “peer teacher” until all members have a chance to share their assignment.
3. Whole group: Debrief by asking members to discuss what was challenging about providing feedback and how the feedback they received as “students” during the activity impacted their learning or experience while reading.

### Reflect and Plan

**Reflect**

1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about effective feedback?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to feedback.
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

**Plan**

5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 9.1) or other lesson planning template.
6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.
7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 9.2) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session.
Handout 9.1 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ____________________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

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<td>Other: ____________________________________________</td>
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</table>

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected? ____________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ____________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

______________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 9.2 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: ____________________________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): __________________________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

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<td>□ Model close reading</td>
<td>□ Improve accessibility</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ Other: __________________________________________________________________________

4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)
_________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

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6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you do differently next time?</th>
<th>What questions do you have? What else do you want to learn?</th>
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### Session 10: Reveal Thinking - Metacognition & Writing

#### Debrief
1. Pairs: Ask team members to debrief the lesson(s) they taught using Actively Learn after Session 9 focusing on effective feedback. Ask pairs to discuss the following:
   - Describe the lesson(s) you taught.
   - What practice(s) did you try and how did your students respond? What impact did it have on student learning outcomes?
   - What worked well and what would you do differently next time?
2. As a whole group, discuss any questions that team members had after teaching their lessons.

#### Define Session Goals
1. Review some of the major themes covered in Session 9:
   - Regular and ongoing feedback that gives students specific guidance on how to improve can increase academic achievement and build students’ intrinsic motivation.
2. Explain that the goal of today’s session is to explore ways to build metacognitive skills in students and how writing can be used to deepen students’ learning across content areas.


Access Prior Knowledge
1. Ask group members to think about a time when they were trying to learn a new skill or improve in some way (e.g., cooking technique, sport, understanding of a particular topic, etc.). Give members several minutes to reflect and write about the actions they took to learn or improve in the area they selected.
2. Small groups: Have group members discuss the actions they took to learn a new skill or improve a current practice and note any themes or repeated ideas.
3. Whole group: Lead the group in a discussion of the following:
   - What were some of the actions that you took to learn or improve?
   - Have you seen your students do similar or different things as they are learning new content in your classroom?
4. Explain to members that metacognition is the awareness of one’s own learning. As they explore resources about metacognition and writing during the session, encourage them to look for connections between these two practices.

Move into New Learning
5. Divide members into two groups -- metacognition and writing. Write the following questions on separate sheets of chart paper and distribute them to the appropriate group:
   - How does metacognition lead to deeper learning?
   - How can you promote metacognition in your classroom?
   - How does writing lead to deeper learning?
   - What are ways you can integrate more writing in your class?
6. Direct each group to do the following:
   - Review the slides in the PL Center for the practice they are focusing on.
   - Discuss the questions on the chart paper and write down ideas.
7. After each group has finished reviewing the slides and discussing the questions, ask groups to switch topics and complete the same tasks (i.e., the group that previously reviewed the slides for metacognition will now focus on writing and vice versa).
• Have the two groups swap the papers with the discussion questions as well. After reviewing the slides, each group should review the other group’s responses and add new any new ideas that came up in their discussion.

Compare Current Practices
8. Ask team members to discuss the following questions:
   • How can integrating writing and promoting metacognition lead to deeper learning for students?
   • What recommendations discussed do you believe would have the greatest impact on your students’ learning?

Experiment With Newly Learned Strategies

During the activity described below members will have the opportunity to work with grade-level or subject-area colleagues to create an assignment that promotes metacognition through writing.

1. Ask members to form partnerships based on grade-level or subject taught. Direct each pair to do the following:
   • Select a text that they would teach in their class. (Members can select a text from Actively Learn’s Catalog or upload their own content.) One member should add the text to their workspace and invite the other member to co-author the assignment. [Note: The “Co-Author” feature is only available to users on premium plans.]
   • Members should add questions and notes to the text that prompt metacognition and encourage students to deepen their understanding through writing.
2. Ask a few pairs to share their assignment with the rest of the group. (If possible, use a projector to display each group’s assignment). As a group, discuss the different ways each assignment integrates writing and builds metacognition.
3. Whole group: Debrief by asking members to discuss what was challenging about promoting metacognition and how they can integrate more writing in their classrooms.

Reflect and Plan

Reflect
1. Ask the team to discuss the following: Is there anything you learned today that either confirms or contradicts what you already knew about metacognition and writing?
2. In light of what they have learned, ask members to brainstorm ideas about specific actions they can implement their classrooms related to metacognition and writing.
3. Have team members consider these ideas and select the one or two actions they believe will have the greatest impact on their students’ learning.
4. Ask the team to discuss the following: What data will you use to determine whether these actions resulted in improved student learning?

Plan
5. Ask team members to develop a plan for how they will implement newly learned practices with their students on Actively Learn prior to the next PL session. Guide team members in completing the Actively Learn Implementation Plan (Handout 10.1) or other lesson planning template.
6. (If time) Provide time for team to begin creating assignments on Actively Learn that they will use in their classroom.
7. Review the Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Guide (Handout 10.2) and remind team members to be prepared to share about their experiences implementing newly learned strategies during the next session. (Although this is the last session focused on a specific practice, consider arranging a final meeting with the PLC to reflect on the entire process and key learnings.)
Handout 10.1 - Actively Learn Implementation Plan

Part I. Which teaching practices do you want to focus on while using Actively Learn?

Reading for depth can be hard for students for a number of reasons (e.g., challenging vocabulary, complex text structure, lack of engagement, etc.). Think about what makes reading deeply and/or understanding new content difficult for your students.

1. Describe one key challenge you’ve observed in your classroom. ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

2. Select one or two teaching practices you’d like to try to address this challenge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activate student thinking</th>
<th>Support student thinking</th>
<th>Reveal student thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Ask higher-order questions</td>
<td>☐ Build background knowledge</td>
<td>☐ Use formative assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Encourage strategic annotation</td>
<td>☐ Scaffold challenging texts</td>
<td>☐ Provide effective feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Facilitate discussion</td>
<td>☐ Build vocabulary</td>
<td>☐ Promote writing extensively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Model close reading</td>
<td>☐ Improve accessibility for reading challenges</td>
<td>☐ Cultivate metacognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

☐ Other: ____________________________________________

3. What action(s) will you take to improve student learning with regard to the practice(s) you selected?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

Part II: What will implementing Actively Learn look like in your classroom?

When introducing a new tool, it’s helpful to start by thinking about the routines and instructional models you already utilize in your classroom (e.g., socratic seminar, bell work, jigsaw reading, etc.). Consider how Actively Learn can enhance or support student learning within one of these structures.

4. Establish a purpose for using Actively Learn. During which classroom activity or routine are you planning to use the platform? ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

5. Outline your plan for using Actively Learn during this activity or routine.

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

6. What challenges do you anticipate when using Actively Learn, and how will you address them?

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________________
Handout 10.2 - Actively Learn Lesson Reflection Form

1. Title of Lesson/Reading: ____________________________________________

2. Student Learning Goal(s): ___________________________________________

3. Select the teaching practice(s) you focused on during this activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activate student thinking</th>
<th>Support student thinking</th>
<th>Reveal student thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Ask higher-order questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Model close reading</td>
<td>□ Improve accessibility</td>
<td>□ Cultivate metacognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

□ Other: __________________________________________________________

4. What specific action(s) did you implement? (Describe what you did to support the practice(s) you selected.)

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

5. Observations: What did you notice about student behavior, learning, and engagement. Record observations about what went well and any challenges from both the teacher and student perspective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that went well</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

6. Reflection: Consider student outcomes and your own experiences teaching this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would you do differently next time?</th>
<th>What questions do you have? What else do you want to learn?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>